









WILLIAM HOWITT'S

ABRIDGMENT

OF HIS

HISTORY OF PRIESTCRAFT



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POPULAR HISTORY  
OF  
PRIESTCRAFT.

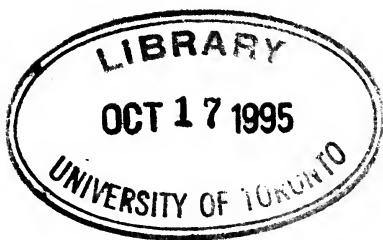
Help us to save free conscience from the paw  
Of hireling wolves, whose Gospel is their maw.  
MILTON.

LONDON:  
EFFINGHAM WILSON, ROYAL EXCHANGE.

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# CONTENTS.

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## PART I.

### FALSE AND CORRUPT RELIGIONS, GENERALLY.

	Page.
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
CHAP. I.—PAGAN PRIESTHOODS . . . . .	2
CHAP. II.—THE JEWISH PRIESTHOOD. . . . .	10
CHAP. III.—THE POPISH PRIESTHOOD . . . . .	12

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## PART II.

### THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

	Page.
CHAP. I.—ORIGIN AND CHARACTER OF THE ENGLISH REFORMED CHURCH . . . . .	20
CHAP. II.—CONSTITUTION OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH . . .	28
CHAP. III.—THE CHURCH OF IRELAND . . . . .	39
CHAP. IV.—WEALTH OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH . . . . .	42
CHAP. V.—TITHES . . . . .	54
CHAP. VI.—CHURCH PATRONAGE . . . . .	60
CHAP. VII.—CHURCH REFORM . . . . .	65
CHAP. VIII.—A CHAPTER OF WORTHIES . . . . .	75
CHAP. IX.—CONCLUSION . . . . .	80



## PREFACE.

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IN publishing the History of Priestcraft, it was my desire to do it at so cheap a rate as to bring it within the reach of as great a portion of the public as possible. For this reason the price was fixed at 5s.; but it was equally desirable that the book should be made as perfect and effective as possible, and therefore in the third edition, matter to the amount of one-third of the original quantity was added, on the English Church; and it was found necessary, from experience gained by the sale of the former editions of the work, to charge it 7s. It was then said that the price of even such a book as this put it out of the power of the working class to obtain it, and it was recommended to publish so large an edition, and in such a form, as to reduce the price to the very lowest scale.

While I was considering how this might best be done, without such a loss as I could not, in justice to my family, incur, I was astonished by the appearance of an advertisement, announcing an abridgment of the work published by John Cleave, at 1s. 6d. But if I was astonished at this impudent invasion of copyright, by a man calling himself a reformer, I was more so, by seeing the *True Sun* newspaper come forward as the unblushing advocate of this piracy.

Its strange article on this subject, consisting of more than a column and a half, may be seen in the No. for June 10th. It assumes that an abridgment of a work is no piracy;—that in complaining of it as a violation of my copyright, I am “both legally and morally wrong.” It quotes several cases of decisions by Judges to prove this; every case so quoted condemn-

ing and convicting itself of error. One case says, that what is called an abridgment, "shall not be a mere transcript;" but this is a mere transcript. I will venture to assert, without possibility of contradiction, that not two pages in the whole ninety-six of which the abridgment consists, have been written by the abridger, but are taken substantially from my work. Another case says, that "a variation in form and manner is a variation in substance;" but here is no variation of form and manner in the matter itself, though there is some little in the disposition of the chapters. They make Lord Mansfield say, that "the Act which secures copyrights to authors, *guards against the piracy of the words and sentiments*;" but this is a wholesale piracy of the words and sentiments of the original.

Thus the quotations made by the Editors of the *True Sun* condemn them; and every case they can quote will, I am sure, condemn them. Lord Hardwicke said, that "an abridgment can only be allowed, when a *voluminous* work is reduced by invention, learning, and judgment, into a portable form;" but here, the original is not a voluminous work, but itself a small octavo volume of matter greatly condensed; and there requires neither invention, learning, nor judgment, further than exist in a pair of shears and a pot of paste, to make such an abridgment as the one they defend.

Such is the Law; and I will venture to say, that only permit their interpretation of it to pass, and there is an end of all copyright. If a man may be allowed, the moment a work proves popular, to knock out a few sentences, or to alter the arrangement of the work in some degree, and then to publish it in a cheaper form, as an abridgment, there is an end of all security of copyright; and consequently of all zeal and enterprise in authors,—for however patriotic authors may be, they cannot live upon the wind.

The same principle might with as much justice be applied to any other species of property. A man might as reasonably knock out a few bricks, or take the top course from your chimney, and then seize upon your house, as an abridgment;

or he might come into your garden, and *alter the arrangement* of your gooseberry trees, and seize your garden as an abridgment. On this principle you have only to crop the ears of a negro, and then he is an abridgment; and you have an admirable argument for the slave trade.

Such abominable doctrines never proceeded from the most avowed enemies of the people, much less from the professed friends of liberty, and right, and reform. Their arguments are neither sound law, nor sound morals. But supposing they had been law?—Are there not many laws that are as iniquitous as those of Pandemonium could possibly be; and deserve from a free and honest press as much reprehension? Supposing it had been law—is it right? And is it not a novelty, and a novelty of the most revolting description, to find a Newspaper founded for the purpose of promulgating sound political knowledge, and sentiments of political integrity, thus coming out as the champion of literary robbery?

It is a singular fact that, writing to all the Newspapers which advertised this pirated work, and the publishers whose names were appended to the advertisement, the True Sun was the only one that did not instantly disavow all knowledge of the real nature of the publication, and declare against all further connexion with it. But this was not all, on the part of the True Sun—it proceeded to advocate the cause of the pirate by some of the strangest and most palpable falsehoods. In the first place, it asserted, that “the author (the pirate) *says truly*, that nearly the whole of it has been re-written from the larger work.” Now anybody who is acquainted with the larger work, as the Editors profess themselves to be, must see, on examination, that the abridgment *is not re-written at all*: but is as complete a transcript as can well be made.

By the way, this doctrine of re-writing a book is one so dishonest, that so far from furnishing an excuse for the invasion of copyright, it ought to be held up to public infamy. I heard a person the other day—a traveller from a very respectable London publishing house, (and professing himself

indeed of the firm) speaking of "the Life of Rowland Hill," say, "Now *there* is a fine opportunity. Any one who will take that book, and re-write it, and get it out in a fortnight before the author can get out his new edition, would make a little fortune." "But," said a lady who was by—"that would be very unprincipled." "*O madam ! it is only what is done every day.*" And this the man thought sufficient justification of one of the most knavish actions that a creature, professing himself a Christian, and bound by his creed to do as he would be done by, could be guilty of !

If such doctrines, I say, are to be tolerated respecting literary property—if they are not only to be tolerated, but trumpeted forth as just and honourable by the reforming press—a press set up to promulgate, amid the mass of the people, right views, right sentiments, right rules of thinking and acting; then, I repeat, all literary property is at an end; and, what is worse, all just and generous principles are at an end. It will be in vain that we call for reform, if we call for it by such mouths. A man shall get together documents of great value; he shall add to them great and laborious research; he shall add to this, much hard thinking and hard labour; he shall devote much expense, and risk still more—for no one can always say beforehand, "assuredly this work shall be popular;" and the moment it does happen to become popular, a thief shall crawl out of his den in some London alley, and seizing upon it, write it again in other words; publish it, as he may, for it costs him nothing, at a low price, and run away with all the profit of the legitimate and astonished author.

"But," says the *True Sun*, in the most amusing manner, "we hope Mr. Howitt will not take legal measures against the author of the abridgment, for if he does it will occasion unpleasant reflections on his own character; he professes to have written the work with patriotic motives, and this will look selfish." Only for a moment imagine a highwayman standing with his pistol at the head of a traveller, and saying, "O! don't be reluctant to be robbed, or it will occasion unpleasant

reflections on your character; pull out your cash with a good grace, or it will look selfish." This is, in fact, the language of the *True Sun*; and it would be amusing, if it were not dishonest in purpose. I should like to know what would be the language and the feeling of the editors of the *True Sun*, if the tables were turned upon them—if some one were to take their paper, knock out the advertisements, and reprinting all the rest, sell it immediately at one penny.

But to render my selfishness more apparent, they resort to another most bare-faced falsehood. They say the original work costs 7s. 6d., and contains 400 pages. Now it sells, as the label itself shews, at 7s., and consists of 427 pages; for the Vindication makes part of the volume. Thus they knowingly exaggerate the price and decrease the quantity of the original, in order to make the abridgment appear cheap. Could these unworthy artifices have been expected from the *True Sun*?

But, dear or cheap, it is quite evident that no one had a right to make an abridgment without my consent; and it has been, and will be again, asked, what can be the motive of the *True Sun* for this strange advocacy of it? Can it be that one of the editors is himself concerned in the piracy, and that John Cleave is but a cat's-paw? I see that Mr. Carpenter has a volume advertised on the pages of the pirated work; I hear that John Cleave makes use of the *True Sun* press.—Can an editor of the *True Sun*, then, be the real author of the abridgment which he defends so warmly? I trust he will not feel offended by this question, for he cannot be ashamed to own what he is not ashamed to commend.

The present abridgment will be found every way superior to the pirated one, for I am determined not to be outdone in cheapness, though I do not steal my material.

W. HOWITT.

Nottingham, June, 1834.





# THE HISTORY OF PRIESTCRAFT.

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## PART I.

### INTRODUCTION.

KINGCRAFT and priestcraft have been the curse of the world. Taking advantage of human necessities—civil government and spiritual instruction—these two evil principles have become the scourges of our race. Kingcraft, seizing hold upon the office of civil government, has proclaimed that the office was not made for man, but man for it: that it possessed a divine right to trample upon men's dearest rights; to shed their blood at its will; and in return, to be worshipped as a God. Its annals are written in blood, and it has left its traces in deserts of everlasting desolation, and in the ferocious spirits of brutalized hordes. It has converted earth into a hell, and men into demons. It has turned the human mind from its natural pursuit of knowledge, virtue, and social happiness, into a career of blind rage and bitter prejudices. So much for Kingcraft!

Many of the fiendish arts and exploits of "that sister pest," Priestcraft, are embodied in ecclesiastical history and the chronicles of Kingcraft; but no lucid and complete picture of it has been presented to the world. It shall be our task to supply this desideratum; to shew that priestcraft has always and everywhere been the same; that its nature is one, and that nature essentially evil; that its object is self-gratification and self-aggrandizement; its means, the basest frauds and the most shameless delusions; that nothing is so mean in weakness, so daring in assumption, or so arrogant in command; that professing to be merciful, nothing has ever exhibited itself in shapes of equal cruelty; that claiming sanctity as its peculiar attribute, nothing has been so licentious; that assuming the mien of humility, nothing is so impiously proud and offensively insolent; that proclaiming to others the utter vanity of worldly goods, its cupidity is insatiable and its ambition boundless; that affecting peace and purity, it has perpetrated the most savage wars, and, in the very name of Heaven, spread far and wide the contagion of sensuality; that in Europe, usurping the seat of knowledge, and the

exclusive promulgation of the doctrines of a religion whose very nature overflows with freedom, and love, and enlightenment, it has locked up the human mind for centuries, mocked it with the most ridiculous baubles, made it the prey to savage passions, robbed it of the highest joys of earth or heaven—the exercise of a perfected intellect and a benevolent heart—and, finally, that, by its tyrannies, puerilities, and inane pomps, it overwhelmed the middle ages with the horrors of bigotry, and modern times with the tenfold horrors of infidel heartlessness, and the wars of atheism.

This is a heavy charge ; but alas ! it is capable of ample proof. Be it observed, however, that the worst systems have often involved in their dark intricacies the very best of men. False or corrupt church establishments have not been without some such.

## CHAPTER I.

### PAGAN PRIESTHOODS.

PRIESTCRAFT exhibited its hideous form immediately after the flood, and there is abundant evidence that all idolatrous worship is derived from the same source. When mankind, who had but one original place of abode, dispersed themselves abroad, they carried their religious opinions, which were uniform in their character, into all the regions of the earth. In progress of time, these opinions were modified and varied by a number of causes, but they have not been so darkened and disfigured as to extinguish those great leading features which characterize them as the offspring of one common parent. The Bible furnishes an unerring solution of the whole theory of universal paganism. The manners, traditions, and language of the various races of mankind, concur with the sacred writings in attesting the common origin of the human family, and the primeval identity of their religious worship.

In all the pagan mythologies we have a triad of principal gods. In the Greek, we have Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto ; in the Hindoo, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva ; in the Egyptian, Osiris, Horus, and Typhon ; in the Persian, Ormuzd, Mithras, and Ahriman ; in the Syriac, Menimus, Aziz, and Ares ; in the Canaanitish, Baal-Shalisha, or self-triplicated Baal ; in the Gothic, Odin, Vile, and Ve ; in the Peruvian, Aponti, Churunti, and Intiquoaqui ; in the Mexican, Mexitle, Tlaloc, and Tezcallipoca. So universally has the notion of a divine triad prevailed. The source of this was, no doubt, the deification of Noah and his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, whom their immediate posterity were led to regard as a re-appearance of Adam and his three sons, Cain, Abel, and Seth. Nor was such a notion without some plausibility. The coincidence of circumstances

between Adam and Noah was of a most singular description. Adam, the first man, and father of the first world, and Noah, the first man, and father of the second world, had each three sons, conspicuous in history; and of these three, one in each case was a bad one—Cain and Ham. These coincidences led men to believe that the second family was an avater of the first; the next step was to consider them immortal, and pay them divine honours.

The ark was also held by the post-diluvians in the most sacred veneration. It was that into which their great father and all living things had entered, and floated away safely over the destroying waters. It was the type of the earth, into which Adam had entered by death; and, as they supposed, re-appeared in Noah. Hence, an ark is to be found in nearly every system of pagan worship. It was the model of the most ancient temples. It was borne in the most religious processions of Osiris, Adonis, Bacchus, Ceres, and amongst the Druids; and it has been found amongst the Mexicans, the North-American Indians, and the South-Sea Islanders.

The doctrine of a succession of worlds naturally arose out of the supposed re-appearance of Adam and his three sons, in Noah and his three sons. The great system of transmigrations and avaters of the Hindoos, is but the expansion of this. Hence, also, the traditions of a universal deluge, to be found amongst all the ancient nations; amongst the wild tribes of America; amongst the Hindoos in the east, and the Celts in the west. Hence, the close connexion of lakes with heathen temples; and hence, lastly, the ancient mysteries, which were but a symbolical representation of entering the ark, or great cave of death and life. As the old world was purified by the flood, so these mysteries were supposed to purify and confer a new life on those who passed through them.

Idolatry, thus diffused over the globe, formed a field for priestcraft to exercise itself in; and by its active malignity the earth was speedily overrun by every curse that could fix itself on humanity.

When we recollect over what an immense extent of country, and through what a number of ages, idolatry extended itself, what a terrible sum of miseries must we see to have been inflicted on our race, by the diabolical zeal and cupidity of priestcraft! From the temple of Buddh and Jaggernath in India, to the stony circles of Druidism in Europe; from the snowy wastes of Siberia and Scandinavia in the north, to the most southern lands in Africa and America, the fires of bloody deities have rejoiced the demoniac priests, and consumed the people.

To whatever part of the world we direct our attention, we shall discover the same evidences of the pollutions and horrors of priestcraft. In Syria, and the neighbouring kingdoms of Philistia, Moab, Amalek, &c., the number of false gods was extremely great; and the principal characteristics of the whole idol dynasty were horrible cruelty, gross licentiousness, and insatiable cupidity.

Of the raneorous activity of the heathen priesthood, to increase

their power and extend their influence, the Jewish history is full. Scarcely had the Hebrews escaped from Egypt, when the Moabites came amongst them with their harlot daughters, carrying beneath their robes the images of Chemosh, and scattering amongst the frail Jews the mingled fires of sensual and idolatrous passion. Through the whole period of the administration of the Judges, the heathen priests were indefatigably at work, and brought upon the backsliding Hebrews the vengeance of their own living and indignant God. The wise and magnificent Solomon they plucked from the height of his peerless knowledge and glory, and rendered the reigns of his successors continual scenes of reproof and desolation, till the whole nation was swept into captivity.

The unbridled sensuality of the pagan worship added greatly to its attractions and power of mischief. The Assyrian Baal was made the scape-goat of the sensuality of the priests, who, under the pretext of providing a sacrifice of beauty to the Deity, selected the most lovely women of the nation for themselves; a species of detestable deception which seems to have been carried on to an enormous extent in ancient times, as the Grecian stories testify. When the Assyrian was merged in the Babylonian empire, the orgies of the temple of Mylitta, the Babylonian Venus, were infamous above all others. Every woman was bound to present herself before the temple once in her life, and there to submit to prostitution with whoever first chose her. The price of her shame was paid into the treasury, to swell the revenues of the priests.

If we turn to Europe, we shall find that whatever was the name, the language, or the government of the different countries, the religion was essentially the same. There was, first, an order of priests; secondly, an order of military nobles; thirdly, a subjugated multitude; and institutions, the spirit of which, is that of thrusting the lower orders from all place and authority, and systematically dooming them to an unalterable state of servile depression.

The priests often united the sacerdotal and sovereign power in their own persons; and where this was not the case, they exercised a power superior to that of kings. They inflicted pains and penalties, exacted the most abject submission, and, as the pretended interpreters of the divine will, dared even to demand, in the name of heaven, the blood of kings. This they obtained.

The great and long-hidden continent of America was, when discovered, found to have been subjected to the same superstitions, the same dominant spirit of priesthood, and the same terrible systems of worship. Mexico and Peru had grown to comparative greatness, and assumed forms of civil polity, with many of the rights and institutions of what is called civilized life. With these, however, was to be found commingled all the great features of that enslaving and degrading superstition which they had brought with them from the continent of Asia, by the way of Behring's Straits. They had their triads of gods; the worship of the sun, of the evil and vindictive

principle, and of serpents. They had the same dominant caste of priests and nobles; the same abject one of the common people; human sacrifices, the burning of slaves and dependants on the funeral pile; they had the ark, the doctrine of successive worlds, and the patriarchal traditions.

Of their bloody sacrifices the Spanish writers are full. Fear is described to have been the soul of the Mexican worship. They never approached their altars without blood, drawn from their own bodies. Of all their offerings, and they were numerous, human sacrifices were deemed to be the most acceptable. Every captive taken in war was sacrificed, with horrid cruelties, at the temple; the head and heart being devoted to the gods, and the body appropriated to the warrior by whom the captive had been taken, to feast himself and his friends. The prevalence of these horrid rites counteracted all the humanizing and softening effects of all their social institutions, and their progress in the arts. Their manners became more ferocious as they advanced, until the barbarity of their actions greatly exceeded those of the savage state.

The number of human victims annually sacrificed by the Mexicans alone, is said to have exceeded twenty thousand! Herrera declares that as many as twenty-five thousand have been sacrificed in a single day! This may be an exaggeration; but all authorities concur in demonstrating the enormous extent of their bloody rites.

The priest-ridden condition of Egypt is known to all readers of history. Lord Shaftesbury calls it, "the mother-land of superstitions." So completely had the priesthood here contrived to fix themselves on the shoulders of the people, so completely to debase and stupify them with an overwhelming abundance of foolish veneration, that the country swarmed with temples, gods, and creatures, which, in themselves most noxious or loathsome, were objects of adoration. Juvenal laughs at them, as making gods of their onions; and dogs, cats, lizards, and other creatures were cherished with the most sacred veneration. The remains of their ancient temples and other sacred buildings, as well as the universal voice of ancient history, sufficiently testify the splendour and absolute dominance of the order of the priesthood in Egypt. The mighty engine employed to enslave the people was the moral and theologic philosophy, which the priests retained as a secret to be carefully shrouded from the vulgar multitude. There was reason in this. The display of science in the exclusive hands of the sacerdotal race, was naturally regarded by a people under the influence of gross superstition, as an evidence of supernatural power.

Amongst the superstitions of Egypt we find, as elsewhere, the horrible rite of human sacrifice. Strabo assures us, that they annually sacrificed to the Nile a noble virgin; and Diodorus affirms that they sacrificed red-haired men at the tomb of Osiris, because his mortal enemy, Typhon, was of that colour. Busiris sacrificed Thracians to appease the angry Nile; and three men were daily

sacrificed to Lucina, at Heliopolis ; instead of which, Amasis afterwards humanely substituted waxen images.

But their rites were characterised by sensuality and lewdness, as well as by bloody cruelty. The Phallic rites engrafted a vulgar and indecent character on the national manners. The abominations of Priapus, and the Bacchanalian and Saturnalian orgies, were propagated amongst the Greeks, by the Egyptian priesthood.

These sensual ceremonies greatly added to the power of the priests, who became, as in other countries, the lordly caste. "The soldiers and the priests," said Herodotus, "are the only ranks in Egypt which are honourably distinguished ; these, each of them, receive from the public a portion of land of twelve acres, free from all taxes : besides this, the military enjoy, in their turn, other advantages ; one thousand are every year, in turn, on the king's guard, and receive, besides their land, a daily allowance of five pounds of bread, two of beef, and four austers of wine." Plato, Plutarch, and Diodorus agree with Herodotus. A prince, say they, cannot reign in Egypt, if he be ignorant of sacred affairs. The king must be either of the race of priests or soldiers ; these two classes being distinguished, the one by their wisdom, the other by their valour. When they have chosen a warrior for king, he is immediately admitted into the order of priests, who instruct him in their mysterious philosophy. The priests may censure the king, give him advice, and regulate his actions ; they fix the time when he shall walk, bathe, or even visit his wife. Their power, in fact, was supreme. Darius wished only to place a statue of himself in a temple, but the priests resisted it, and he was obliged to submit. M. Larcher even supposes, and he is borne out by a number of concurring circumstances, that the priests were, for many ages, the sole sovereigns of Egypt. A most triumphant reign of Priestcraft, indeed !

The popular theology of Greece, though it had the same origin as all other mythologies, assumed, by passing through the glorious minds of Hesiod and Homer, all those characters of grace and beauty which they conferred on their literature, their philosophy, and all the arts and embellishments of life.

But beautiful as the system was made to appear by the embellishments of their immortal poets, the Grecians celebrated the same mysteries, offered the same human sacrifices, and were contaminated by the same Phallic abominations, as all the other pagan nations. The genius of the people, bold and free, however, saved them from the extreme horrors and degradations of priesthood. In all other countries the priests were the monopolists of knowledge ; but in Greece, Homer poured it abroad, like light through the earth, and his countrymen became imbued by the same dauntless, untameable spirit ; alike intolerant of the despotism of the throne and the altar.

Priestcraft therefore adapted its policy to the spirit of the people. It gratified their curiosity of the present and the future, by mysteries

and oracles ; their love of grace and festivity, by processions and joyous festivals ; it captivated and awed their sensitive imaginations, by aid of the fine arts, erecting magnificent temples, paintings, and sculpture, specimens of which remain to command the admiration, if not the worship, of the world. To these were added the appliances of sacrifices, human and bestial ; auguries and oracles, games and mysteries. By thus providing for the tastes of all, the Priests attained their object—wealth and unbounded influence.

Diodorus Siculus, speaking of their wealth, says, “ The principal hoards of treasure, both in bullion and coined money, were in their temples, which were crowded with presents of immense value, brought by the superstitious from every part of Greece. These temples were considered as national banks ; and the priests officiated as bankers,—not always, indeed, the most honest, as was once proved at Athens, where the state treasurers, having expended or embezzled the public money, had the audacity to set fire to that part of the temple of Minerva where the treasure was contained ; by which sacrilegious act that magnificent fane was near being wholly consumed. Their purpose, however, was fully answered, since the registers of the temple were reported to have perished with the treasures, and all responsibility precluded.”

We have no means of knowing the amount of treasure concealed by the Grecian priesthood in their sacred depositaries. When the Phocenses, urged to despair by the exactions of the Thebans, seized on the treasures of Delphi, they amounted to ten thousand talents ; above 2,250,000*l.* sterling ; a small portion only, in all probability, of what sacerdotal perfidy had previously secured.

The consequences of this spirit of priestly avarice need not be dwelt upon. They are exhibited in the history of ancient Greece. The wealth drained from the people, by priestly machinations, was eventually appropriated to the payment of the soldiers, who enslaved and destroyed them. And in this fate Greece has not been singular. It has been the same in almost every other country, where the priests have obtained domination.

In INDIA, priestcraft assumed its most determined and fearless air. In other lands, it placed itself in the first rank of honour and power. In this it went a step further. Its chains appear to be indissolubly rivetted on the mind of this mighty empire. The perfection of its craft and the selfishness of its spirit are exhibited in millions on millions bound in chains of the most slavish and soul-quelling castes, and the servility of a subtle religious creed. India has its triad of gods ; its doctrine of metempsychosis, its practice of the Phallic licentiousness, its horrors of human sacrifice and self-immolation. We need not specify the bloody rites of Jaggernath, the barbarous burning of widows, or the unnatural immolation of children. Throughout continental India, we have an example of priestcraft in its most decided, undisguised, subtle, and triumphant character, at once in full flower and full fruit ; in that state at which it has

always and everywhere aimed, but never attained elsewhere. It has here stamped itself, on the heart of a great nation, in its broadest and most imperishable style ; in all its avowed despotism, its selfishness, imperturbable pride, and cool arrogance of fanatical power.

Of the obscenities of the Brahminical system and the venality of the priests, a well-authenticated writer thus speaks : “ Incited, unquestionably, by the hieroglyphic emblems of vice so conspicuously elevated and strikingly painted in the temple of Mahadeo, the priests of that deity industriously selected the most beautiful females that could be found, and, in their tenderest years, with great pomp and solemnity, consecrated them, as it is impiously called, to the service of the divinity of the pagoda. They were trained in every art to delude and delight, and, to the fascination of external beauty, their artful betrayers added the attractions arising from mental accomplishments. Thus was an invariable rule of the Hindoos, that women have no concern with literature, dispensed with on this infamous occasion. The moment these hapless creatures reached maturity, they fell victims to the lust of the Brahmins. They were early taught to practise the most alluring blandishments, to roll the expressive eye of wanton pleasure, and to invite to criminal indulgence, by stealing upon the beholder the tender look of voluptuous languishing. They were instructed to mould their elegant and airy forms into the most enticing attitudes and the most lascivious gestures ; while the rapid and most graceful motion of their feet, adorned with golden bells and glittering with jewels, kept unison with the exquisite melody of their voices. Every pagoda has a band of these young syrens, whose business on great festivals is to dance in public before the idol, to sing hymns in his honour, and in private to enrich the treasury of the pagoda by the wages of prostitution. These women are not, however, regarded in a dishonourable light ; they are considered as wedded to the idol, and they partake the veneration paid to him. They are forbidden ever to desert the pagoda where they are educated, and are never permitted to marry ; but the offspring, if any, of their criminal embraces, are considered sacred to the idol : the boys are taught to play on the sacred instruments used at the festivals ; and the daughters are devoted to the abandoned occupation of their mothers.

“ The reader has, doubtless, heard and read frequently of the degeneracy and venality of PRIESTS ; and we know from Herodotus, what scandalous prostitutions were suffered in honour of Mylitta ; but a system of corruption, so systematical, so deliberate, and so nefarious,—and that professedly carried on in the name and for the advantage of religion,—stands perhaps unrivalled in the history of the world, and the annals of infamy. It was by degrees that the Eleusinian worship arrived at the point of its extreme enormity ; and the obscenities, finally prevalent, were equally regretted and disclaimed by the institutions ; but in India we see an avowed plan of shameless seduction and debauchery : the priest himself converted



into a base procurer ; and the pagoda itself into a public brothel. The devout Mahometan traveller, whose journey in India, in the ninth century, has been published by M. Renaudot, and from which account this description is partly taken, concludes the article by a solemn thanksgiving to the Almighty, that he and his nation were delivered from the errors of infidelity, and were unstained by the enormities of so criminal a devotion.

The avarice of the sacerdotal tribe in India kept pace with the same passion in the priesthood of other parts of the world. Immense quantities of wealth were made to flow into their coffers. Their pagodas were adorned with the richest metals ; the altars and sacred vessels of the temples were of massy gold ; and their statues, numerous and large, were made of the same material ; or that next to it in value, silver.

The treasures which Timour took in Delhi, were enormous ; rubies, pearls, and diamonds, gold and silver vessels, money and bullion, were carried away in such profusion by his army that the soldiers absolutely refused to encumber themselves with more ; and an abundant harvest of plunder was left to future invaders. The riches accumulated by the priests of this affluent region exceed, indeed, the power of the imagination to grasp them. Mr. Orme (in his *History of Hindostan*) tells us :—that the Brahmins slumbered in the most luxurious repose in their splendid pagodas, where the numbers accommodated were astonishing ; that pilgrims came from all parts of the Peninsula to worship at that of Seringham, but none without an offering of money ; that a large part of the revenue of the island is allotted for the maintenance of the Brahmins who inhabit it ; and that these, with their families, formerly composed a multitude, not less in number than forty thousand souls, supported without labour, by the liberality of superstition.

Having thus seized the reins of unlimited power, the Priests had only to command, and make an empire of slaves. And such was their course. The Brahmin wielded both the empire and monarch. He stood in the place of the deity ; the will of Heaven was thought to issue from his lips, and his decision was revered as the fiat of destiny. In fact, the Indian government is justly considered as a theocracy—a theocracy the more terrible, because the name of God was perverted to sanction and support the most dreadful species of despotism ;—a despotism which, not content with subjugating the body, tyrannized over the prostrate faculties of the enslaved mind.

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Such is the picture of Priestcraft, and such the terrible spectacle of its effects. In lands, however distant, and times, however remote, we can make but one discovery—a suffering people, and a proud and imperious priesthood. Like the Old Man of the Sea upon the shoulders of poor Sinbad, Priestcraft, the old man of the church, has ridden on the shoulders of humanity, and set at

defiance all endeavour to dislodge him. Unlike the Old Man of the Sea, whose best beverage was a brook, he is too well inured to strong drinks, to be readily overcome by them. He has quaffed the juice of all vines; presided at the festivities of all nations; poured libations to all gods: in the wild orgies of the ancient German and British forests he has revelled; in the midnight feast of skulls he has pledged the savage and the cannibal; the war-feast of the wilderness, or the sacred banquet of the refined Greek, alike found him a guest; he has taken the cup of pollution from the hand of the Babylonian harlot; and pledged, in the robes of the Gallic Primate, renunciation of the Christian religion with the Athiest. Lover of all royal fêtes; delighter in the crimson-cushioned ease of all festivals in high places; soul of all jollity where the plunderers and the deluders of men are met to rejoice over their achievements; inspirer of all choice schemes for the destruction of liberty and genuine knowledge when the vintage of triumphant fraud ferments in his brain, till the wine of God's wrath, in the shape of man's indignation, confound him,—what shall move him from his living throne? From the days of the Flood to those of William the Fourth of England, he has ridden on, exultingly, the everlasting incubus of the groaning world.

Note.—For the full and interesting details of Pagan Priestcraft, see our larger work.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE JEWISH PRIESTHOOD.

It might have been anticipated, that the only priesthood ever ordained by Heaven, would prove a striking exception to the general character of the sacerdotal order. But it would almost seem as if one design of the Almighty, in the Jewish system, was to demonstrate how radically mischievous an ecclesiastical order must be, under any conceivable circumstances. The Jewish priests were a distinct tribe, without any landed inheritance like that possessed by the other tribes, and wholly dependent upon the altar. But notwithstanding this fair title, so strongly did the universal spirit of priestcraft work in them, that their history may be comprised in a few sentences, though one of the most extraordinary in the world. It began in Aaron, with idolatry and evasion; exhibited itself more fully in the sons of Eli, in peculation, oppression, and lewdness; and terminated in the crucifixion of Christ!

When we review this history, with all its extraordinary and super-human circumstances, we are thunderstruck with astonishment,

we are satisfied for ever of the rooted and incurable malignancy of priestcraft. If the fate of all other nations addressed us in vain, that of the Jews should be to us an eternal warning. The priests of God's own ordination first corrupted, and then destroyed, the kingdom. They began with idolatry, and ended with crucifying the Son of God himself. Their victims, the Jews, still walk before our eyes, a perpetual and fearful testimony against them—objects of the contempt, loathing, and persecution of all ages, and of every race.

When Christ appeared, the career of paganism was checked, and the fate of Judaism sealed. A system of religion, inconceivable in its beauty, and unparalleled in the philanthropy of its founder, was placed before the world. Unlike all other founders of a religious faith, Christ had no selfishness, no desire of dominance; and his system, unlike all other systems of worship, was bloodless, beneficent, pure, and, most marvellous of all, went to break all bonds—of body and soul; and to cast down every temporal and spiritual tyranny. It was adapted for the wide world; framed to embrace men of all climes, all ages, all ranks of life and intellect. It represented the Almighty as the father, and all men as brethren born to one universal love, to the same inalienable rights, and to the same eternal hope. The Redeemer himself was the living personification of his principles. Demolishing the most inveterate prejudices of men, by appearing a poor man amongst the poor; by tearing from aristocratic pride and priestly insolence their masks of most orthodox assurance; by proclaiming that the truth which he taught should make all men free; by declaring that the Gentiles lorded it over and oppressed one another, but that it should not be so with his followers; by pulling down with indignation spiritual pride in high places, and calling the poor and afflicted his brethren, and the objects of his tenderest regard,—he laid the foundations of civil and religious freedom, of mental power growing out of unrestrained mental energies, and of love and knowledge co-equal in extension with the world. This perfect freedom of universal man he guarded by leaving no DECREES; but merely great and everlasting principles, intelligible to the mind and conscience of the whole human race; and on which, men in all countries, might found institutions most consonant to their wants. By declaring that “wherever two or three were met together in his name, he would be in the midst of them,” he cut off, for ever, every claim, the most specious, of priestly dominance; and by expressing his unqualified and indignant abhorrence of every desire of his disciples “to call fire from heaven upon his enemies,” or to forbid those to preach and work miracles in his name, who did not immediately follow him, and conform to their notions, he left to his church a light more resplendent than that of the sun, on the subject of non-interference with the sacred liberty and prerogatives of conscience.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE POPISH PRIESTHOOD.

UPON the introduction of the Christian system, it would not have been unreasonable to suppose that the arm of priestcraft would have been broken ; that it would never more have dared to raise its head. But it is a principle of shameless avidity and audacity ; and it is from this very time that we trace the most amazing career of its delusions and atrocities, down to the day of our own existence.

Scarcely had the persecutions of the pagan emperors ceased, when the Christian church became inundated with corruptions and superstitions of every kind. Constantine embraced Christianity ; and almost the whole world embraced it nominally with him. From such a conversion, the work of regal example and interested hopes, what effects were to be expected ? The martial tyranny of ancient Rome, which had subdued the world, was coming to an end. The wealth of which a thousand states had been stripped, had turned to poison in her bosom, and brought upon the stern mistress of bloodshed and tears, that retribution from which national rapine and injustice never eventually escape. But as if the ghost of departed despotism hovered over the Seven Hills, and sought only a fresh body to arise in a worse shape, a new tyranny commenced, ten times more terrible and hateful than the old,—because it was one which sought to subjugate, not merely the persons of men, but to extinguish knowledge ; to crush into everlasting childishness the human mind, and to rule it, in its fatuity, with mysteries and terrors. The spirit of priestcraft rose up in Rome, and assumed all its ancient and inflated claims. Satan himself became enthroned on the Seven Hills, in the habit of a priest, and grinned his broadest delight amidst the public and universal reign of ignorance, hypocrisy, venality, and lust.

The earliest means employed by the bishops of Rome for the acquisition of power, was an assertion of their supremacy over all other bishops of the Christian church. But this power was not attained at once. The attempt to grasp it, led to many quarrels with their contemporaries ; and the contest carried on with the patriarchs of Constantinople, in particular, led to many disgraceful exhibitions of priestly wrath, on both sides ; for the prelates of the Greek church partook largely of the arts and vices of priests in general.

In the 4th century, the bishop of Rome had obtained the pre-eminence in the episcopal order ; and the see became, in consequence, a most seducing object of sacerdotal ambition. At the election of a pontiff, the city of Rome was usually agitated by extraordinary tumults ; and on one of these occasions, in the year 366, a civil war was excited, which led to the most barbarous practices and cruel massacres.

During the fourth century, many of those steps were laid by which the bishops of Rome subsequently mounted to the summit of ecclesiastical power and despotism; and in the fifth century, the declining power of the emperors left the pontiff at liberty to exercise authority almost without control.

In the seventh century, the Roman pontiffs had recourse to the most unheard of stratagems to maintain and enlarge the pre-eminence and power they had acquired. The deposition and massacre of kings and emperors; the subjugation of kingdoms; and other haughty, arrogant, and barbarous acts, are abundantly scattered through the annals of that period. It was not, however, till the time of Hildebrand, afterwards known as Gregory VII., that the full measure of the priestly spirit was exhibited in Rome. Sagacious, crafty, and intrepid, he suffered nothing to escape his penetration, defeat his stratagems, or daunt his courage. He looked up to the summit of universal empire with a wistful eye, and laboured up the steep ascent with uninterrupted ardour and invincible perseverance. Void of all principle, destitute of every virtuous feeling, he suffered little restraint in his audacious pursuits from the dictates of religion, or the remonstrances of conscience. Not content to enlarge the jurisdiction and augment the opulence of the see of Rome, he strove to render the universal church subject to its despotism; to dissolve the jurisdiction of kings and princes over the various orders of the clergy, and exclude them from the management of the revenues of the church. Nay, he would subject to his power kings, emperors, and princes themselves; and render their dominions tributary to Rome. Such were the pious and apostolic exploits that employed Gregory VII. during his own life; and which rendered his pontificate a continual scene of tumult and bloodshed. He declared France tributary to the see of Rome, and ordered his legates to demand yearly, in the most solemn manner, the payment of that tribute. He drew up an oath for the emperor to the Romans, from whom he demanded a profession of subjection and obedience. He pretended that Saxony was a feudal tenure, having been a pious offering of Charlemagne to the see of Rome. He claimed Spain: maintained it had been the property of the apostolic see from the earliest times of the church; and the Spanish princes paid him tribute. He made the like attempts on England: but found in William the Conqueror a different subject. William granted his Peter-pence, but refused to do homage for his crown. He wrote circular letters to the German princes, to Geysa, king of Hungary, and Sweno, king of Denmark, demanding submission. The son of Demetrius, czar of the Russias, went to Rome, in consequence of his letters, to obtain the kingdom which would devolve to him on his father's death, as a gift from St. Peter, after professing subjection and allegiance to the prince of the Apostles,—a gift readily granted by the officious pope, who was extremely liberal of what did not belong to him. Demetrius Suinimer, duke of Croatia and Dalmatia, was raised to royalty by

him in the year 1076 ; and solemnly proclaimed king at Salona, on condition that he should pay annually two hundred pieces of gold to St. Peter, at the Easter festival. Boleslaus II., king of Poland, having killed Stanislaus, bishop of Cracow, Gregory not only excommunicated him, but hurled him from his throne ; dissolved the oath of allegiance which his subjects had taken ; and forbid, by an express and imperious edict, the nobles and clergy of Poland from electing a new king without his leave.

In Italy, his success was transcendent. Matilda, the daughter of Boniface, duke of Tuscany, the most powerful and opulent princess of that country, found that neither ambition nor years had extinguished the tender passion in the heart of Gregory,—and as a testimony of the familiarity which existed between them, settled all her possessions in Italy and elsewhere upon the church of Rome ; an act, however, strongly resisted by her successor, and the cause of many struggles and much bloodshed.

In the eighth century, the humiliating ceremony of kissing the Pope's toe was introduced ; and subsequently, emperors were subjected to the indignity of holding his stirrup. To complete his despotic power over every Christian prince, the Roman pontiff claimed and exercised the sole right of installing bishops in their office ; thus making the whole church dependent on him, and therefore subservient to all papal views.

The example of the pontiffs was not lost on the bishops, abbots, and inferior clergy. These, even in the time of Charlemagne, had actually obtained for their tenants and possessions an immunity from the jurisdiction of the magistrates ; as also from all taxes and imposts. Subsequently, they carried their pretensions still further,—aimed at the civil government of the cities and territories, in which they exercised a spiritual dominion ; and even aspired to the honours and authority of dukes, marquises, and counts of the empire. They became bishops and abbots, clothed with titles and dignities,—reverend dukes, marquises, counts, and viscounts !

It was not, however, by these means only that they sought dominion over the world. They brought into use all their various engines of power, deception and corruption. They could not imitate the pagan priesthood, in assuming a higher origin than the rest of mankind, and therefore entitled to pre-eminence ; but they took a course quite as effective. They declared themselves to be the accredited vicegerents of Heaven ; and by a gross and unblushing perversion of the words of the Redeemer, proceeded, as we have seen, to rule over nations and kings. They proclaimed the infallibility of the pope and his conclave of cardinals ; and thus excluded all dissent. Their first act, having once taken this station, was that which has been the practice of priests in all countries,—to shut up the true knowledge amongst themselves. They wrapt the simple truths of the Gospel in mysteries—they shut up the very book that was given to enlighten the world—the very book which declared of its own con-

tents, that "they were so clear that he who ran might read them;" that they taught a way of life so perspicuous, that "the wayfaring man, though a fool, could not err therein." This placed the whole earth in their power. The people were ignorant; and they taught them what they pleased. They delivered all sorts of pernicious dogmas, as scripture; and who could contradict them?

Having thus prostrated the human mind, they lorded it over the people with insolent impunity. The Bann was adopted, and its terrors became felt throughout Christendom. Was a king refractory—did he refuse the pontifical demand of money—had he an opinion of his own—a repugnance to comply with papal influence in his affairs?—The thunders of the Vatican were launched against him; his kingdom was laid under the bann; all people were forbidden, on pain of eternal damnation, to trade with his subjects; all churches were shut; the nation was on a sudden deprived of all exterior exercises of its religion; the altars were despoiled of their ornaments; the crosses, the reliques, the images, and the statues of the saints were laid on the ground; and, as if the air itself might pollute them by its contact, the priests carefully covered them up, even from their own approach and veneration. The use of bells entirely ceased in the churches; the bells themselves were removed from the steeples, and laid on the ground, with the other sacred utensils. Mass was celebrated with shut doors, and none but the priests were admitted to the holy institution. The clergy refused to marry, baptise, or bury; the dead were cast into ditches, or lay putrefying on the ground; till the superstitious people, looking on their children who died without baptism, as gone to perdition, and those dead without Christian burial, as seized on by the devil, rose in rebellious fury, and obliged the prince to submit and humble himself before the proud priest of Rome. Wordsworth has an affecting description of a kingdom under the bann:—

Realms quake by turns: proud arbitress of grace,  
The church, by mandate shadowing forth the power  
She arrogates o'er heaven's eternal door,  
Closes the gates of every sacred place.  
Strait from the sun and tainted air's embrace  
All sacred things are covered; cheerful morn  
Grows sad as night—no seemly garb is worn,  
Nor is a face allowed to meet a face  
With natural smile of greeting. Bells are dumb;  
Ditches are graves—funereal rites denied;  
And in the church-yard he must take his bride  
Who dares be wedded! Fancies thickly come  
Into the pensive heart ill fortified,  
And comfortless despairs, the soul benumb.

The invention of monkery was a capital piece of priestly ingenuity. By this means the whole world became inundated with monks and friars,

Black, white, and grey, with all their trumpery.

A standing army of vigilant forces was set up in every kingdom. Scattered through every town and village, they became familiar spies of the papacy; ready, at a signal, to carry terror into every region, and rivet still faster the chains of the Romish superstition.

The imaginations of the people were dazzled and won over, by imposing ceremonies; statuary and painting; carnivals, religious festivals, and endless processions. The fascinating rites of the heathen worship found its counterpart in the Christian church!

But other expedients equally potent were adopted. Oral confession was invented. Every person was to confess his sins to the priest, and thus put him into possession of everything which could enslave a man to him. Who was so pure in life and thought, that, after having unbosomed himself to his confessor—made him the depository of his most secret thoughts, his weakest or worst actions—dare any more to oppose or offend him? But the chains of shame and fear were not all; those of hope were added. The priest had not only power to hear sins, but to pardon them. He could shut up in hell, or let out; he was not content with enslaving his follower in this world—he carried on his influence to the next, and even invented a world, from the tortures of which no man could escape without his permission.

Frauds were invented, to besot and blind the popular spirit.\* Monks, bishops, warriors, and men of the worst characters, nay of neither character nor real existence, as St. George and his dragon, were canonized, and their lives written in a manner most calculated to beguile the ignorance of the times. Shrines were set up and churches dedicated to them, where people might pray for their aid. Dreams and miracles were pretended to throw light on the places of their burial; solemn processions were set on foot to discover and take them up; and the most miraculous powers were attributed to them. Bones were buried, and afterwards pretended to be found, and declared by Heaven to belong to saints and martyrs: and bits of bone, hairs, fragments of filthy rags, and other vile things; chips of the true cross, etc., were sold at enormous prices, as capable of working cures and effecting blessings of all kinds.

Rumours were spread of PRODIGES to be seen in certain places; robbers were converted into martyrs; tombs falsely given out to be those of saints; and many monks travelled from place to place, not only selling, with matchless impudence, their fictitious relics, but deluding the eyes of the people with ludicrous combats with spirits and genii.

PILGRIMAGES to distant holy places were hit upon, as a strong means to employ the minds and enslave the affections of numbers;

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\* See the singular history of the tricks played off upon Jetzer in the larger work, p. 126.



and CRUSADES, those preposterous and tremendous wars whose details are filled with the most exquisite miseries, and most abhorrent crimes and licentiousness, were promoted, as potent means of employing the power and exhausting the treasures of kings. In those crusades, millions of miserable wretches—men, women, and children—the low, the ignorant, the idle, the dissolute,—after wandering from kingdom to kingdom, the wonder and horror of the inhabitants, were consumed; and from those crusades in return, loads of relics were poured out of Syria over all Europe. INDULGENCES were granted for the commission of crime, and past sins pardoned for money and gifts of lands: and PURGATORY! that most subtle and profitable invention of priestcraft, was contrived, to give the church power over both living and dead.

But the most potent and frightful engine of the papacy, was the INQUISITION. Its history is one of the most awful horrors that can affright the human soul. Its HOLY OFFICERS—its OFFICERS OF MERCY, as they were called in that spirit of devilish abuse of Christianity in which they were conceived, were speedily to be found in various countries of Europe, Asia, and America, but distinguished most fearfully in Spain. These horrors have been made familiar to the public mind by the writers of romance, especially by Mrs. Ratcliffe; but all the powers of romance have not been able to overcolour the reality. Spain has always gloried in the supremacy of her inquisition. She has strenuously contended with the pope for it; and has deemed it so great an honour, as to parade the *auto-da-fé*, as one of her most fascinating spectacles. Her kings, her queens, her princes, and her nobles, have assembled with enthusiasm to witness them. So great a treat did the Spaniards formerly consider them, that Llorente states, that on February 25th, 1560, one was celebrated by the inquisitors of Toledo, in which several persons were burnt, with some effigies, and a great number subjected to penances; and this was performed to entertain the new queen, Elizabeth, daughter of Henry II. of France, a girl of thirteen years of age, accustomed in her own country to brilliant festivals suitable to her rank and age. So completely may priestcraft brutalize a nation, and so completely has this devilish institution stamped the Spanish character, naturally ardent and chivalric, with gloomy horror, that both Llorente and Limborch represent ladies witnessing the agonizing tortures of men and women expiring in flames, with transports of delight.

The original ostensible object of this bloody institution was to extirpate the Jews, Moors, and Morescoes; and so successful were its efforts, that according to Llorente, in 119 years, it deprived Spain of 3,000,000 of inhabitants. The Reformation appeared, and found the monsters thus engaged, fresh employment. The doctrines of Luther appear not to have made so rapid a progress in any other country as in Spain. The inquisition had the satisfaction of extinguishing the revived flame of Christianity there, and of

reducing Spain to its present deplorable condition. All the fury and strength of that great engine of hell was brought to bear upon it : its auto-da-fé was crowded with Lutheran heretics ; its fires consumed them ; its secret cells devoured them—men, women, children were swept into its unfathomable gulf of destruction. Priestly malice triumphed.

To such gigantic stature of power did this dismal institution attain, that no one was safe from its fangs. The confiscation of the goods of its victims whetted the appetite of priestly avarice so keenly, that a man, to be guilty of heresy, had only to be rich. Llorente gives several cases of English merchants, who were pounced upon by it, in defiance of the law of nations.

We have not space to detail the atrocities committed by this odious institution. Limborch has given the following vivid summary of its operations:—"In countries where the inquisition has existed, the bare idea of its progress damped the most ardent mind. Formidable and ferocious as the rapacious tiger, who from the gloomy thicket surveys his unsuspecting prey, until the favoured moment arrives in which he may plunge forward and consummate its destruction, the inquisition meditates in secret and in silence its horrific projects. In the deepest seclusion, the calumniator propounds his charge ; with anxious vigilance the creatures of its power regard its unhappy victim. Not a whisper is heard, or the least hint of insecurity given, until at the dead of night a band of savage monsters surround the dwelling ; they demand an entrance:—upon the inquiry, by whom is that required ? the answer is, ' the holy office.' In an instant all the ties of nature appear as if dissolved, and either through the complete dominion of superstition, or the conviction that resistance would be vain, the master, parent, husband, is resigned. From the bosom of his family, and bereft of all domestic comforts, he enters the inquisition house ; its ponderous doors are closed, and hope excluded—perhaps for ever. Immured in a noisome vault, surrounded by impenetrable walls, he is left alone ; a prey to all the sad reflections of a miserable outcast. If he venture to inquire the reason of his fate, he is told, that silence and secrecy are here inviolable. Accustomed to the conveniences of social life, and perhaps of a superior station, he is now reduced to the most miserable expedients. The most menial offices now devolve upon him ; while the cruel reflection obtrudes itself upon his mind, that his family may, ere long, be reduced to indigence by an act of inquisitorial confiscation."

The punishment of confiscation is followed, as of necessary consequence, by the person being rendered for ever infamous,—that is, he is incapable of holding office of any kind ; his children are disinherited, and made infamous, or incapable to the second generation by the father's side, and to the first by the mother's. All his relations are liberated from their obligations to him ; his children are freed from his control ; his wife is liberated from her marriage vows ; his servants or vassals are freed from their servitude ; he is compelled to

answer inquiries of others on any affair, but no one need answer him. He has no protection from the laws, and no remedy against oppression or injustice.

The secret examinations, the stripping, the modes of torture, and the celebration of the auto-da-fé, are all described in the larger work, but we must dispense with the description of these revolting acts, in this abridgment. We have given enough of them to exhibit the diabolical spirit of the inquisition, and of the sacerdotal monsters who were its originators and upholders.

The victims who have suffered death or ruin from this diabolical institution, in various quarters of the world, are estimated at some millions. Llorente gives, from actual examination of its own records, the following statement of the victims of the Spanish Inquisition alone:

Number of persons who were condemned, and perished							
in the flames	.	.	.	.	.	.	31,912
Effigies burnt.	.	.	.	.	.	.	17,659
Condemned to severe penances	.	.	.	.	.	.	291,450
							<hr/>
							341,021

How all this could be built on the foundation of Christianity might be wondered at; but it should never be forgotten, that the Bible was locked up, and everything directed to the acquisition of power and gain.

Let every man who hesitates to set his hand to the destruction of state religions, look on this picture of all enormities that can disgrace our nature, and reflect that such is the inevitable tendency of all priestcraft. It is said we see nothing so bad now! And why? Because man has got the upper hand of his tyrant, and keeps him in awe,—not because the nature of priestcraft is altered; and yet, let us turn but our eyes to Catholic countries, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and the scene is lamentable; and even in our own country, where free institutions check presumption, and the press terrifies many a monster from the light of day,—we behold things which make our hearts throb with indignation.

## PART II.

### OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### ORIGIN AND CHARACTER OF THE ENGLISH REFORMED CHURCH.

It might have been supposed, that when so large a portion of Europe had been aroused to burst asunder the chains by which the papacy had bound them, they would have taken care so to organise the reformed church or churches, as to prevent the reassumption of temporal power by the sacerdotal order. But this would be to expect more than past experience will justify. It is much easier to abridge such a power as that at which we have glanced, in the preceding chapter, than to extinguish it altogether; besides which it may be remarked, that the mind of man is too much enslaved and debased by such a system, to perceive at once the whole extent of the evil under which it labours, and is rendered too infirm of purpose to adopt all the severe measures which it even perceives necessary, to prevent the recurrence of the evil from which it has suffered.

Such has been the fate, more or less, of all the reformed churches of Europe—but especially of the Church of England, the least reformed and the most enslaved of them all.

The reformation in England was not the result of any conviction or enthusiasm in the popular mind; but was brought about by the arbitrary acts and turbulent passions of that libidinous and bloody monster, Henry VIII. When it suited his purpose or gratified his caprice, he was the advocate of the pope; when otherwise, he was his most desperate antagonist. He threw off the papal yoke, not to give the church freedom, but to make it his own servant and slave. He declared himself to be the head of the church in these realms. The despotism remained, though the despot was changed. The will of this regal monster was the sole law. He declared that his proclamation was tantamount to law, and acted upon it, both civilly and ecclesiastically. He dealt out royal murders abundantly. The papists he killed, because they did not go far enough for him; the protestants, because they would go too far. He made his parliament pass, in 1539, the famous Bloody Statute, or Statute of Six Articles, by which the actual Presence was declared to be in the sacramental bread and wine; priests were forbidden to marry; vows of chastity were to be observed; and mass and auricular confession maintained. This act was in force for the remainder of his reign; and those who opposed it were to suffer death. Yet this was called, a reformation! The royal reformer issued his fiat, that no

doctrine should be believed contrary to the Six Articles ; that no person should sing or rhyme contrary to it ; that there should be no book possessed by any one against the holy sacrament ; no annotations, or preambles in Bibles and Testaments in English ; that no women, artificers, apprentices, journeymen, servingmen, husbandmen, or labourers, should read the New Testament in English ; that nothing should be taught contrary to the king's instructions. Yet this was a reformation ! During this time, nothing could be more despicable than the sycophancy and subserviency of the clergy. There was but one bishop (Fisher, of Rochester), who refused to take the oath of supremacy—and for this he was beheaded, with Sir Thomas More.\* The rest, though they were as hostile to the change as possible, as full of bigotry as ever, satisfied themselves with giving all the opposition they could to the spread of real reformation amongst the people.

The parochial livings were filled with friars and monks, who had been turned out of their convents, in order to save government the forty-five shillings which had been stipulated to be given to every such friar and monk at the dissolution of their houses. These were so ignorant, that they could not read a syllable ; and so habitually luxurious, that, says Giraldus Cambrensis, “ the monks of St. Swithin's came in a body to complain to Henry, that his commissioners had reduced their fare till there was no living. Henry inquired into this lamentable reduction, and found that they had been accustomed at dinner to thirteen dishes, and the commissioners had reduced them to ten : on which Henry exclaimed, with his usual oath—‘ By God's teeth ! my good fellows, he hath left you too many ; for I myself have but three ! ’ ”

Edward VI. was well disposed, but he was only a child ; and Cranmer and Ridley, with a few privy-counsellors, taking advantage of the Act of Supremacy passed by Henry VIII., proceeded to model a religious establishment according to their own notions. They were doubtless well-intentioned men, for they afterwards testified their sincerity in their own blood ; but they had been nurtured in the cruel bosom of papacy, and were far enough from having

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\* One of the most signal instances, in history, of the inconsistency of human nature. He was the glory of the age in which he lived, for his brilliant genius, his refined wit, and his integrity of mind,—he would rather lose his head than the approbation of his conscience. Yet this man was at once a declaimer against persecution, and a bloody persecutor himself. In his character of Lord Chancellor and Privy Counsellor, he was excessively severe upon those who came before him for violation of the king's Bloody Statute, and even had poor Bainton to his own house, and there whipped and tortured him with his own hand, because he could not persuade him by reasoning to alter his opinions.

truly learned the merciful gospel of Christ. So little had they advanced out of the Romish darkness when they began to legislate for Christianity, that they persecuted the venerable Hooper, because he could not consent to wear the canonical copes, and tippets, and rochets, which afterwards occasioned so much suffering. He would have declined the bishopric of Gloucester; but, no!—he must both be a bishop, and wear those abhorred robes; and till he consented, was harassed, menaced, and finally imprisoned. So miserable was the progress made in real reformation in this boasted reign! The celebrated Bucer, divinity professor at Cambridge, drew up and presented to the king, a work containing a plan of ecclesiastical reform, of strict discipline, likely to keep the clergy in order. The book made a great impression on the king's mind, but he was already sinking in health, and it never was proceeded in.

Mary succeeded, and deluged the country with protestant blood; and those priests who had pretended conversion to keep their livings, now fell back to avowed popery, and became terrible persecutors; especially bishop Bonner, one of the most sanguinary wretches in history—who, with the characteristic selfishness of all tyrants, when confined in the Tower in Edward's reign, for his insolent intractability, sent this message to his servants, that "he gave them to the devil, the devil, and all the devils, if they did not send him plenty of pears and puddings;" a man who now thrust the best spirits of the age into his coal-hole, and tortured them in his own house, with a fiendish delight, in agonies scarcely to be paralleled by the worst of Spanish inquisitors.

The imperious Elizabeth followed, and enforced the worship and discipline of the Church, by the famous but intolerant Act of Uniformity. Objections for conscience sake, were put down by the unanswerable arguments of fire and fagot. The reformed religion was stained with blood; liberty of conscience was denied, as formerly; and all the horrors of the Romish persecution were revived. She had Edward's forty-two articles revised, and reduced to thirty-nine, as they now stand; bringing them as near to popery as possible, and expecting every one to conform entirely to them. She declared that she did not want to look into people's hearts;—they might think as they pleased; but they should outwardly, and in all points, conform to her plan; with her, hypocrites and good subjects were synonymous! Whoever dared to differ in doctrine, or rites, she visited with the utmost severity. The distress this produced, was general and extreme. Numbers of worthy clergymen were expelled from their livings, and they and their families brought to ruin. They were fined and imprisoned, and that to death.

The inquisition was as completely set up in England as in Italy, Spain, or any of the old priest-ridden countries; and how its powers were exercised may be seen in too fearful colours on the broad page of English history, and in the more full relations of the non-conformists and dissenters. Clergymen who could not mould their

consciences at the will of the state, were ejected without mercy from their livings, and they and their families exposed to all the horrors of poverty, contempt, and persecution. So far as the regular clergy, however, were concerned, the grievance was not great; for these acted according to the dictates of priestly cunning, accommodated their consciences to their comfortable condition, and came over in a body to the new state of things. The bishops, Hume says, having the eye of the world more particularly on them, made it a point of honour, and having, by a sickly season, been reduced to fourteen, all these, except the bishop of Llandaff, refused compliance, and were degraded. Out of the 10,000 parishes of England, only eighty vicars and rectors, fifty prebendaries, fifteen heads of colleges, twelve archdeacons, and as many deans, sacrificed their livings to their religious principles; a fact rendered more striking by a future one,—that of the Presbyterian clergy, who had obtained livings during the Commonwealth, and who, on the passing of the Act of Uniformity again, on the restoration of Charles II., resigned, to the number of 2000, in one day, though the most able of them had been tempted with offers of bishoprics, deaneries, and other preferments.

Such was the formation of the church of England! Can any one wonder that it needs thorough reform; not merely of its abuses, which are monstrous, but a reform and entire remodelling of its canons? While all around it has been progressing in knowledge and better understanding of the rights of conscience, and the true nature of Christianity, she has been standing still, covered with all her deformities, with the mark of the beast blazing on her forehead, and the filthy rags of cast-off popery fluttering about her. While every clearer eye has been regarding this patchwork progeny of priestcraft and barbarism with mingled wonder, ridicule, and abhorrence, she has been hugging herself in the fond idea, that she was the queen of beauty, and the perfection of holiness! While the civilized world has been moving about her, casting off the mind, the manners, and the harsh tenets of feudal rudeness; she has lain coiled up in the bright face of advancing day, like some huge slimy dragon, cast up by the sea of ages, in the midst of a stirring and refined city; and has only exhibited signs of life by waving her huge scaled tail, in menace of her foes, and by stretching out her ten-taloned paws to devour a tenth of the land.

The history of the Society of Friends is full of the most singular persecutions on the part of the clergy, and of the magistracy, incited by them. The state clergy saw, that if this body succeeded, priestcraft was gone for ever;—royalty, on its restoration, saw that it would lop off the right arm of despotism,—a craft, paid to preach the divine rights of kings, and passive obedience of the people. Seeing how a royal religion disturbed the church of Christ, and neutralized all its benign doctrines, they determined, cost what it would, to hold no communion with it. They would neither marry at its altars, nor bury in its soil; and for this their dead were torn

out of their graves by the parish priests and their minions ; and they were not only heavily fined and imprisoned for their marrying, but their children were declared bastards. The whole fury of the executive power was let loose upon them. They were given up a prey to vindictive parsons, and ignorant, priest-ridden justices of the peace ; and to the whole greedy race of informers, constables, and the lowest of the rabble. In 1670, the king issued an order in council, signed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and thirteen others, commanding Christopher Wren, esq., to pull down their meeting-house at Horsleydown ; which was done, and the materials sold. The same was done to other meeting-houses. But the Friends still met on the ruins of those places, where they were assailed by soldiers, who fell upon them with the butt-end of their muskets, and maltreated them so dreadfully, that the blood lay in the streets, and several died in consequence. Old age was not spared ; the women in particular were treated with brutal indecency, and finally, all their places of worship were nailed up, and soldiers set to keep them away. Nothing, however, could prevent them meeting ; and often, especially all the hard winter of 1683, they collected in the streets, and suffered incredible hardships from the cold, the soldiers, and the mob. They were ruinously fined under Elizabeth's statute, of 20*l.* a month. Twenty-eight individuals alone paid 520*l.* 15*s.* 2*d.* Their houses were broken open, without ceremony, with sledge-hammers and screws, and their property plundered by wholesale, under the plea of collecting tithes, church-rates, and fines for non-attendance at church. One parson declared, " he would rather see all the Quakers hanged than loose a sixpence by them." For shillings they generally took pounds, leaving, in many instances, not a tool or a piece of goods for a man to pursue his trade by ; not a horse or a plough for him to work his farm with. This one specimen may serve as an illustration of the general mode :

The fines for non-attendance of church at Bristol, for

38 men, for eleven months . . . . .	£ 8,360
For two of their wives, for the same time . . . . .	220
For 111 men, for three months . . . . .	6,660
For 40 of their wives, for the same time . . . . .	1,200

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£ 16,440

The amount of property taken from them for these fines, church-rates, tithes, and some few military demands, but chiefly the former, given in to the society, from 1655 to 1833, is 1,192,820*l.* Besides this, a great quantity of property was given in with no value attached to it, which, with the utter ruin of trade, and wanton destruction of the effects of many families, cannot amount to less than one million and a half—a sum which is still increasing, from distrains on this small society, at an average of 14,000*l.* a year.



These sufferings lasted for thirty years ; and the simple, and mere matter-of-fact recital of them, fills two thick folio volumes, containing upwards of 1400 closely printed pages. They consist of every imaginable species of outrage and insult, petty vexation, and agonizing suffering ; every species of legal and illegal plunder ; loss of estates, friends, liberty, and life itself ; such as the same number of Englishmen scarcely ever suffered, or suffered with such invincible firmness. In London they filled the prisons in suffocating crowds, where, in 1662, twenty died, and seven more soon after their liberation, in consequence of their treatment ; in 1664, twenty-five more, and in the following year, fifty-two others. Through the whole kingdom the same inhuman persecutions were practised ; and the number which perished under them was 369.

To escape from this, William Penn led on his persecuted brethren to America, and founded one of the states of that noble country, which has now arisen to a pitch of prosperity which is the natural fruit of liberty. America stands forth as an every-day opprobrium on priestcraft, and as a proof of the utter uselessness and impolicy of clerical establishments.

Charles II., on his restoration, renewed all the persecutions of his bloody race. He pursued the Scotch Covenanters to the mountains and morasses, with fire and sword ; enacting all the horrors of racks, thumb-screws, and the iron boot, as may be seen vividly detailed in Sir Walter Scott's "Tales of a Grandfather," and "Old Mortality." —Neale says, "The writer of the Preface to Mr. De Laune's Plea for Nonconformists, says, that De Laune was one of near EIGHT THOUSAND who had perished in prison in the reign of Charles II. ; and that, merely for dissenting from the church in some points for which they are able to bring good reason. As for the severe penalties inflicted on them for seditious and riotous assemblies, designed only for the worship of God, he adds, that they suffered in their trades and estates, within the compass of five years, at least two MILLIONS. Another writer adds, that Mr. Jeremy White had carefully collected a list of the dissenting sufferers, and of their sufferings, and had the names of SIXTY THOUSAND PERSONS who had suffered on a religious account, between the restoration of Charles II. and the revolution of king William, FIVE THOUSAND of whom died in prison.—It is certain that, besides those who suffered in their own country, great numbers retired to the plantations and different parts of America. Many transported themselves and their effects to Holland, and filled the English churches of Amsterdam, the Hague, etc. If we admit the dissenting families of the several denominations in England to be one hundred and fifty thousand, and that each family suffered no more than the loss of three or four pounds per annum from the Act of Uniformity, the whole will amount to twelve or fourteen millions ; a prodigious sum for those times. But these are only conjectures. The damage done to the trade and property of the nation was undoubtedly immense, and the wounds that were made in

the estates of private families were deep and large ; many of whom, to my knowledge, wear the scars of them to this day\*."

This is a melancholy sketch of the history of the English church ; but it cannot be controverted. It is a history—as that of every state religion must be—of power usurping the throne of conscience ; thrusting the spirit of the people from free address to and communion with their Maker, and on refusal of obedience, following them with the fire and sword of persecution.

The nature of the Christian religion is essentially free ; the voice of Christ proclaims to men—" the truth shall make you free !" The spirit of Christianity shrinks from the touch of the iron and blood-stained hand of political rule ; it is so boundless in its aspirations, and expansive in its energies, that it must stand on the broad campaign of civil and intellectual liberty, ere it can stretch its wings effectively for that flight which is destined to encompass the earth, and end only in eternity. What we have detailed has been the consequence of attempting to chain this free spirit to the car of state. The history of dissent is full of these horrors : and Ireland, in which the same system was pursued ; and Scotland, that sooner than submit to it, rose and stood to the death in many a mountain pass and bloody valley, can testify to the same odious policy. The oppressions and resistance of the Scottish Covenanters,—the bloody havoc made amongst them by the soldiery of reformed kings and a reformed church ; and their undaunted and most picturesque celebration of their own simple worship, have been made immortal by Sir Walter Scott. From the first to the last—from the accession of James I. to the throne of England, to the expulsion of James II. from that throne, a period of upwards of eighty years, the Stuarts persisted in the most tyrannical endeavours to force on their native country of Scotland the episcopal church ; and, in consequence, deluged that high-spirited and beautiful country with blood. Many a solitary heath, many a scene of savage rocks in that land, where the peasant now passes by, and only wonders at its wild silence, are yet loud in the ear of heaven, in eternal complaints of the bloody and domineering deeds of the English church, wrought by its advice and by the hireling murderers of its royal head ; many a name—as Kilsyth, Killiecrankie and Bothwell Bridge—will rise up for ever in the souls of men against her.

While power was left to the church, it persecuted and would have continued to persecute. The Act of William III. put an end to this ; and we must henceforth look for the spirit of priestcraft in a different shape. The whole course of this work has shewn that this wily spirit has conformed itself to circumstances. Where unlimited power was within its grasp, it seized it without hesitation, and exercised it without mercy. Egypt, India, all ancient Asia, and all feudal Europe, are witnesses of this. Where it could not act so

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\* Hist. of Puritans, vol. ii. pages 608-9.

freely, it submitted to the spirit of the people ; and worked more quietly, more unseen, but equally effectually, as in Greece and Pagan Rome. England, after William III., afforded no further scope for imprisonment, the martyr's flaming pile, or the bloody axe of the public executioner. It was rapidly careering in a course of knowledge and civilization, which made men acquainted with their rights, and has eventually lifted this nation to the proudest position ever occupied by any people in the whole history of the world. The established clergy, therefore, had nothing to do but to secure the full enjoyment of their revenues, and that parochial influence with which they were invested ; and the consequence is, that, in the noblest nation of the earth, they have become the richest body of priests and the most apathetic towards the people, from whom their wealth is drawn. If we look at the dignitaries of the church, and at the description of the dignitaries of the papal church in its latter days of universal influence, can we avoid being struck with the coincidence of character ? " They pass their days amidst the pleasures and cabals of courts ; and appear rather the slaves of princes, than the servants of Him whose kingdom is not of this world. They court glory : they aspire after riches ; while very few employ their time and labour in edifying the people, or in promoting among them the vital spirit of religion ; and, what is more deplorable, those bishops who, sensible of the sanctity of their character, and the duties of their office, distinguish themselves by zeal in the cause of virtue, are frequently exposed to the malicious efforts of envy, often loaded with false accusations, and involved in perplexities of various kinds."

Does the establishment stand before us and call herself holy, and meek, and beneficent, with all these crimes, all these lives, all this blood and misery, on her head ? Well would it have been for Ireland, well for England, well for the episcopalian church itself, if some Jenny Geddes had been found, as in Edinburgh, to launch her three-legged stool at the head of the clergyman when he began to deal out a state liturgy ; and had been followed by the simultaneous efforts of the whole people, to teach kings and priests to respect the inalienable rights of conscience.

But the English church, which has been lauded by its interested supporters, as a model of all that is pure, dignified, and holy, has not only compelled dissent by its tyranny, but is composed, like Nebuchadnezzar's image, of most ill-agreeing materials, and has consequently been rent with different factions. The Tudors established popish rites, and Edward VI. introduced Calvinistic doctrines. These, retained by Elizabeth and James, Charles I. singularly enough, sanctioned, at the same moment that, under the management of his domineering Archbishop, Laud, he was carrying Arminianism, and the claims of episcopal power, to the highest pitch,—that is, the doctrine of free-will, and a prelatical despotism, destructive of all free-will. These circumstances, and those which followed, gave the church, what Lord Chatham so expressively designated in Parliament—a Popish liturgy, a Calvinistic creed, and an Arminian clergy.

The heterogeneous materials of the church have been strikingly shewn in the various efforts made to reform her. Tillotson, Burnet, Stillingfleet, Watson, Law, and Paley, made propositions to this effect in their writings, which startled their brethren ; and Hoadley made such a declaration of the anti-Christianity of a state religion, as rent the church with years of violent controversy. By the accession of William and Mary, a great schism was made ; part of the hierarchy adhering to the Stuart line, and refusing to swear allegiance to the new dynasty (thus acquiring the name of Non-jurors). They thus split the church into high and low,—two parties, whose feuds continued till a very recent period, when the Evangelicals appeared, to bear prolonged evidence to the internal destitution of the principles of cohesion in the establishment.

Note.—Much matter calculated to excite the astonishment and indignation of the reader, in the history of the English church, is necessarily omitted in this abridgment, but will be found in the original work.

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## CHAPTER II.

### CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

WE have exhibited the origin and traced the progress of the reformed English church. What could be expected of a church begotten in the conflict of evil passions, nurtured by crime, and sustained by persecution, but that which has been seen ? As the tree is, so are its fruits. It is an institution designed for the aggrandisement of priests and the subjugation of the popular mind ; and the means employed to secure these objects have been every way worthy of them.

In order, however, to judge more correctly of the real character of the English church, let us take a view of its constitution and present state, as represented or admitted by its supporters, preceded by an outline of what it was in its earlier days.

In a rare tract, entitled, “*Omnia Comesta a Bello*,” printed in 1667, is given the following sketch of the constitution of the church :—

“THE REVENUE, POMP, AND STATE OF THE PRELATES.

“There are two provincial Archbishops, Canterbury and York, with their princely retinue, domestic chaplains, officers for temporalities, their spiritual officers, Vicar-General, Guardian of the Spiritualities, Dean of the Arches, with all their under-officers and attendants.

“Secondly. THEIR COURTS.

Court of Faculties.

Court of Audience.

Prerogative Court.

Delegates.

“ There are four-and-twenty Bishops Diocesan, with their trains, domestic chaplains, officers, and courts. To these belong—

26 Chancellors, and their Attendants.	24 Gentlemen Apparitors.
24 Registrars, with their Clerks.	120 Inferior Apparitors.
	48 Proctors.

“ There are, under these Bishops—

“ 60 Archdeacons ; and these have 60 Courts, to which belong—

Commissaries.	60 Registrars.
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Officials.	120 Proctors.
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Surrogates.	200 Apparitors.
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“ So that the number belonging to Archbishops, Bishops, Archdeacons, and their trade, are judged to be no less than ten thousand persons ; which will require for their maintenance, two hundred thousand pounds per annum, reckoning them at twenty pounds a man : whereas some of them have one hundred pounds, some four hundred pounds, squeezed out of the poor people. As for their standing rents, they are well known. Their lordly palaces, sumptuous houses, ecclesiastical dignities, etc.—*vij. s. et modis*, such is their income, that it amounts, at least, to four hundred and fifty thousand pounds a year.

“ THEY HAVE MANY OTHER WAYS TO ENRICH THEMSELVES, AND IMPOVERISH THE NATION : AS,

“ First ; By ordaining Deacons and Ministers four times a year for money ; by which they put up yearly, hundreds of pounds.

“ Secondly ; By instituting and inducting Parsons and Vicars to benefices when they fall. For every such induction, they have three pounds at the least. And in England there are 9285 parishes ; so that, at the rate of one in a parish, it amounts to twenty-seven thousand, eight hundred and fifty-five pounds.

“ Thirdly ; By making Rural Deans yearly ; and for the oath taken, they pay eight shillings and sixpence.

Fourthly ; By granting licenses to the beneficed ministers to preach in their own cures. Though they be ordained before, and strictly commanded to preach, yet they must not do it without a license ; and this license costs them ten shillings ; so that in 9285 parishes, this comes to four thousand six hundred and fifty-two pounds, ten shillings.

“ Fifthly ; by granting—

1. Licenses to curates to preach.

2. „ for schoolmasters to teach school.

3. „ for parish clerks.

4. „ to midwives, to do their office.

5. „ to marry—which thing of itself arises to a vast sum.

6. For absolving excommunicated persons.

7. For putting men to clear themselves by oath with their compurgators.

8. For commutation of penance ; for so the rich come off with a round sum of money, but the poor doing their penance in kind, must stand excommunicated till they have paid their fees.

“ Sixthly ; By probates of wills, and granting letters of administration ; which brings in constantly great sums of money.

“ Seventhly ; By framing new Articles, and forcing churchwardens to present upon oath, whereby many innocent persons are brought into their courts, and squeezed, both in conscience and purse (the penalty for non-attendance at church being twenty pounds a month) ; and the churchwarden is squeezed also, if he do not take the oath prepared for him.

“ BY THEIR VISITATIONS FOR MONEY.

“ First ; Churchwardens of every parish in England, and chapel, are called ; who receive a Book of Articles to present by ; and if any are wanting, they are warned to appear at their courts, with costs. These churchwardens pay for their Books of Articles every year (though the very same) ; as also for writing their presentments by a clerk (which they themselves could do, but are not permitted), two shillings and fourpence ; which in 9285 parishes, cometh to one thousand and fifty-eight pounds, odd money, yearly.

“ Secondly ; Ministers that are licensed, pay one shilling and eight-pence, or thereabouts, for shewing their license to preach to the Registrar, at every Bishop’s visitation, though seen and allowed before : after that, four shillings for procuration to the Bishop ; and to the gentleman apparitor, eight-pence, most pay twelve-pence.

“ I shall omit the poor curates’ suit and service at this court ; only let you know, that when an Archbishop comes newly to York, all the Parsons and Vicars in his jurisdiction, though never so poor, and their charge never so great, give him a tenth of their livings for a Benevolence, to help the poor Bishop to settle himself in five or six thousands a year ; and if any, yea the meanest Vicar, whose poor children want bread, do through poverty omit the payment, this Reverend Father doth pitifully whip him to the very bones in his merciless Spiritual Court.

“ BY ARCHDEACONS’ VISITATIONS.

“ These are twice a year. At Easter Visitation they pay their Paschal Rents, or Synodals, which it seems are not alike to all ; some pay fifty-six, some less. At Michaelmas they pay Procurations ; some seven shillings, some ten shillings, some less ; but it is judged that ministers pay yearly at Visitations five thousand pounds and upwards.

“ BY THE VAST CHARGES IN COLLEGIATE CHURCHES.

“ There are twenty-six great Deans, with their attendants and servants.

“ 544 Canons Residents, and Prebendaries, with a numerous train of—

Vicars.  
Peti-canons.  
Singing men and boys.  
Choristers.

Organists.  
Gospellers.  
Epistellers.  
Vergers,

“ Now this jovial crew have belonging to them about four hundred thousand pounds yearly, in lands, rents, leases, and other revenues and profits thereunto belonging.”

This is a curious picture of a REFORMED church in 1667 ; only seven years after the restoration of Charles II., by which it regained its power. Wise and good men would have been taught temperance and forbearance, by the adversities and humiliations of the commonwealth ; but the dignitaries of the church rushed again to the seats from which they had been driven by the people, like so many hungry wolves, rendered mad by their temporary abstinence, and ready to prey on all that came into their power, even upon their own order, “ whipping the poorest vicars to the very bones, if they failed of their payments.” The whole of the cathedral property had been sold by the state to private individuals ; all this was reclaimed in the most summary manner, and not a penny of compensation paid. “ And what,” this writer goes on to ask, “ did the nation get by the restoration of this hierarchy ? In all other trades, men have something for their money. The farmer hath good lands from the gentleman for his money ; the clothier hath good wool from the farmer for his money ; the merchant hath good cloth from the clothier for his money ; and thus it goes round to every one’s benefit. But pray, what have we got from the bishops for our money ?

“ We have all our able, godly, orthodox ministers ruined and beggared, and no manner of supply provided for the maintenance of them and their families ; and in their rooms, in many places, a company of debauched, illiterate, superstitious, profane priests, which, blind guides, must needs lead them that follow them to hell.

“ We have gotten most of our churchwardens perjured, that do swear to present according to their Visitation Articles, and most of them undone that do not swear ; although the imposing of such an oath is a breach of the fundamental law of the land. If a minister, never so godly, preach in a cloak, and not in a garment canonical, he is bound to present him. If any person go to hear a sermon from his own parish church, though there be no preaching there, and though he is bound by his baptismal vow to hear preaching, this man is to be presented. If a poor man hath not bread for his family, but what he earneth by his daily labour, and he work on a holyday, appointed by Romish institution, he is to be presented. If any person coming to church, do not stand up at the Creed, do not bow at the name of Jesus, do not keep his hat off all the while, he must be presented. Now there are in all, threescore and fourteen thousand churchwardens and sides-men in England every year ; and what a dreadful thing is it, to have all these yearly, either perjured persecutors, or persecuted !

“ We have gotten most of the sober, trading part of the nation discouraged by citations, excommunications, writs to take them excommunicated, imprisonments upon ecclesiastical accounts. By this means, thousands of families are already ruined, and many

hundreds are ready to leave the land, and seek some other country where they may have liberty of conscience, and freedom from these devouring harpies.

“ We have got, instead of the gospel in the power and purity of it, a service collected out of the Romish books, the Mass, Breviary, etc. : which service of ours King James called an ill-sung mass. We have got surplices, copes, tippets, chringings, etc., out of the Romish rituals, so that the papists themselves call it an apish imitation of the mass. We have gotten a swarm of ecclesiastical officers which the Scriptures never knew, nor reformed churches never owned. We have got a sort of proud prelates, of mean extract, not of the highest rank for godliness, learning, and labour in the world, nor the greatest champions for the reformed religion : yet very elate they are, affronting our nobility, trampling upon our gentry, grinding to powder all that put not into their mouths, or offer not at their shrine ; insomuch that a gentleman of quality, of 3000*l.* per annum, speaking to one of the said prelates boldly, but with due respect, the prelate, in a fume, answered—“ What, sir, do you think that it is fit for every Jack gentleman to speak thus to a bishop ?”—deriding the gentry of our land as not worthy to speak to a peevish prelate. Surely a gentleman of 500*l.* per annum would not be allowed to speak thus to his postilion !

“ We have gotten all manner of misery to soul and body,—plague, fire, sword, universal beggary, and without seasonable mercy, the total ruin of the whole kingdom.”

Such is the testimony to the fruits of restoring, in the rear of monarchy, that evil spirit—the Legion of Prelacy, which had been so well cast out. Let the reader bear in mind, that the sums of money here mentioned are but about the fourth part of what the same property would now produce, and it will give some curious results. In particular, the Dean and Chapter property still continues to be valued by the clergy at about 290,000*l.* per annum ; whereas, at that time, it was estimated at 400,000*l.* a year.

We will now take a survey of the church as it is at present.

#### THE KING, HEAD OF THE CHURCH, AND DEFENDER OF THE FAITH.

We have seen the motive from which Henry VIII. determined to occupy this singular station ; it enabled him to appoint the bishops, and keep them subservient to his own purposes.

This power has been exercised with the most fatal results to the character of the hierarchy, and without anything but evil to religion itself. The king has always looked upon the church as a public sponge, through which he could suck up and squeeze out again at his pleasure, the wealth of the people. The clergy have gathered up the fees, and tithes, and donations given under many a pious delusion, and the kings have put their hands into the church-box and helped themselves with great delight. William the Conqueror, to



furnish his wars in the fourth year of his reign, took all the money, jewels, and plate out of the religious houses, making a rigorous search, and sparing not even the chalices and shrines. He reduced the lands of the church into knights' fees, making the bishops do military service for their baronies, and expelled such as opposed the measure. His son Rufus trod in his steps, and spared no manner of rapine or simony. As soon as bishoprics and abbeys became vacant, he seized upon all their temporalities, farmed them out to his favourites, or to such as giving most for them, did not spare to rack the tenants to the utmost; not conferring the offices themselves on persons of merit, but selling them to the highest bidder. Henry I. continued the same custom, holding the primacy in his hands five years, and regularly selling bishoprics, particularly that of Durham, for 1,000*l.*, an enormous sum in that day. Stephen, Henry II., Richard I., and John, repeated all the exactions and simony on the church practised by their ancestors. The Henrys and the Edwards, in their continual wars, had great occasion for money, and they did not fail to levy freely on the clergy, to the amount frequently of 50,000*l.* or 100,000*l.* at a time,—monstrous sums for those days, but indicating that the church was a mine of wealth. At length Henry VIII. laid his bold hand on the whole booty, and swept it all into his capacious crypt, to the amount of 30,503,400*l.*; the gold and jewelery he estimated at one million alone; giving back just what he pleased, and making even that subject to the payment of his first-fruits and tenths. Queen Anne finally took compassion on the poor clergy, and was cheated by the rich out of these first-fruits and tenths. All this loving intercourse of king and church, in every period of our history, demonstrates that church property has always been deemed state property. The king, being head of the church, did what he thought proper with the cash he found in the pockets of its lower members: a fact which the clergy are now anxious to get rid of, raising the outcry of vested rights, that cant-word of all corruptionists, when government would recall what it once lent for political purposes.

#### NEXT, WE HAVE TWO ARCHBISHOPS.

For these officers in a reformed church, the advocates of the system have been sorely puzzled to account. For the bishops, they could find a name in the New Testament, although the name agrees but little with the present office; but for Archbishops there does not exist in the Scripture even a name. They are standing monuments of the wretched patchwork which was made by our kings, and called a reformation. They have no duties distinct from the bishops, nor does it appear that they have any jurisdiction over them. They do not appoint them, and they cannot remove them. They cannot, without the king's concurrence, call them together in convocation. Their sole use, therefore, seems to be "to rear their mitred fronts in courts and parliaments;" to vote in the train of ministers; to rule

their wide and opulent domains ; count their enormous revenues, and dispose of good livings to sons, brothers, nephews, cousins, and relations and dependents, without end, as their own interest, or the interest of ministers, reserved by special agreement, may dictate.

#### WE HAVE ALSO TWENTY-FOUR BISHOPS.

The reformed church would have us believe that it is founded on the Rock of ages, and organized on the strict principles of the New Testament. Yet, in almost the only instance in which it has retained the scriptural name, it has taken care to separate it from the scriptural office. St. Paul tells us that a bishop “ must not be given to filthy lucre ; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate.” The bishop of the apostolic churches was synonymous with the elder and presbyter—was, in fact, the pastor of a flock ; as is admitted by all the most celebrated commentators, ancient and modern. Johannes Parisiensis says, that when Constantine gave temporalities to the bishops, a voice was heard from heaven, crying, “ This day is poison poured into the church !” Yet the English Church, which affects to be so truly apostolical, has abandoned the scriptural bishops, and taken those which popery borrowed of Constantine. The English bishop has not an attribute in common with the apostolical. He is not the pastor of one flock, diligent in preaching, and caring for the comfort and salvation of his charge. All this is devolved on the common clergy. The bishop has no flock at all ; preaching does not make part of his vocation ; he does not even come in contact with the clergy over whom he is nominally set, except once in three years, when he makes his hurried visitation to one or two of the chief towns of his diocese. His duties are of a widely different nature. To sit as a judge and law-maker in parliament ; to superintend his great estates, and revenues of 70,000*l.* a year, as in London ; or 30,000*l.*, as Durham ; to preside in his court over a variety of secular matters. Yet would the members of the establishment persuade us that these men are the legitimate successors and representatives of the martyrs and first reformers of the Anglican church !

The words of the venerable Tyndal, are most striking :—“ Wo to the realm where prelates are of the council ! As profitable are the prelacy to the realm with their counsel, as wolves to the sheep, as foxes to the geese ; for there is no mischief, or disorder, whether it be in the temporal regiment or the spiritual, whereof they are not the chief causes, and even the very foundation and spring ; so that it is impossible to preach against any mischief, unless thou begin at them ; or set up any reformation in the world, except they are first reformed. They are as indurate as Pharaoh, and therefore persecute God’s word, and the preachers thereof. They stir up mischief in the world, setting princes to war ; they get into the consciences of kings, and persuade them what they list—neither can any king have rest for them. They pretend they are for God and the church, but

their secret intent is to bring all under their power ; and when they are once set up on high, then are they tyrants above all tyrants.— . . . Bishops that preach not, or that preach aught save God's word, are none of Christ's, nor of his anointing, but servants of the beast, whose mark they bear, whose word they preach, whose law they maintain clean against God's law."

Such are the sentiments of many great lights of the English Reformation ; and numerous friends of the establishment, in more modern times, agree with them. Dr. King, Principal of St. Mary Hall, Oxford, and author of " Political and Literary Anecdotes of his own Times," who died in 1763, says—" To speak freely, I know nothing that has brought so great a reproach on the church of England as the avarice and ambition of our bishops. Chandler, bishop of Durham, Willis, bishop of Winchester, Potter, archbishop of Canterbury, Gibson and Sherlock, bishops of London, all died shamefully rich ; some of them worth more than 100,000*l*. I must add to these, my old antagonist, Gilbert, predecessor to Drummond, the present archbishop of York. Some of these prelates were esteemed great divines, and I know they were learned men—but they could not be called good Christians. The great wealth they heaped up, the fruits of their bishoprics, and which they left to enrich their families, was not their own ; it was due to God, to the church, and their poor brethren."

Blackwood's Magazine, the great champion of Toryism and the church, in an article in Nov. 1830, on the present state of the establishment, asks,—“ Why is this man made a bishop ? He has been tutor in one family, or he is connected in blood with another,\*

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\* Mr. Beverly gives the following list of bishops, as they were at the date of the publication of his *Horrida Hystrix*, in 1826 :—

Tomline,	————	Bishop of Winchester, tutor to Pitt.
Haye,	————	Bristol, married a Mortlock, whose family govern the borough of Cambridge, for the Rutland interest.
Bethel,	————	Gloucester, tutor to the Duke of Northumberland.
Bloomfield,	————	Chester, married into the Harvey family.
Sharpe,	————	Ely, tutor to the Duke of Rutland.
Pelham,	————	Lincoln, brother to the Earl of Chichester.
Huntingdon	————	Hereford, tutor to Lord Sidmouth.
Howley,	————	London, tutor to the Prince of Orange.
Law,	————	Bath and Wells, brother to Lord Ellenborough.

To these we may now add :—

Grey,	————	Bishop of Hereford, brother of Lord Grey.
Poynton,	————	Derry, brother-in-law of Lord Grey.
Ryder,	————	Lichfield, brother of Lord Harrowby.
Bagot,	————	Oxford, brother of Lord Bagot.
Vernon,	————	Archbishop of York, brother of the late Lord Vernon.

or he enjoys the patronage of some polluted female favourite of royalty, or he is the near relative of the minister : or at the nod of the premier he has been a traitor to the church, in a matter affecting her existence."

If such be the nature of English episcopacy, as delineated by its founders and friends ; if it exists only for purposes of state, or the aggrandisement of political tools and family flatterers, to what part of the system must we look for that moral discipline which a Christian church requires ? Is it to the archdeacons and their deputies ? They are busied in the bishop's courts, collecting his revenues, or transacting his secular matters of wills and licenses ; and as to those archidiaconal functions which have reference to the moral conduct and personal duties of the parochial clergy, the Rev. Dr. Nihill, one of their own body, declares, that " any archdeacon who should attempt to revive the full powers with which he is theoretically armed, would only expose himself and the church to derision."

Is it then to the deans and chapters we must turn ? Why, these are mere excrescences in the diseased and disjointed system. They have no vital connexion with any part of it. They exist only for themselves ; and have been happily termed the rotten boroughs of the church. The deans and chapters nominally elect the bishops ; but this is mere farce—they are elected by the ministers of the crown. The only real functions of the chapters are to perform service in the cathedrals, and to keep them in order. For this they possess about half a million of yearly income. Their object is to draw clergymen from their own proper livings, to cluster in idleness round these great buildings ; thus aggravating the already crying sin of pluralities,—which the canons of the church declare to be " execrable before God."

In thus going through this great and imposing pageant of our national establishment, crowded with its archbishops, bishops, deans, archdeacons, prebendaries, vicars-general, chancellors, commissaries, surrogates, registrars, proctors, apparitors, etc., etc., we can discover no real system of moral discipline ; no effective connexion between these officers and the parish clergy. These live as the ancient Danites did, " every man doeth what seemeth good in his own eyes ;" and who shall hinder him ? The archdeacon may, if his own hands are clean—which they seldom are, being generally one of those " execrable before God,"—a pluralist, a sinecurist, a non-resident, most probably one of the " sect of prebendaries," as Cranmer calls them, " good vianders, too much given to belly cheer ;" he may cause the churchwardens to present such delinquents in the Bishop's Court ; and the bishop may reprimand or menace ; and what will they heed ? Nothing ! They know that neither archdeacon nor bishop have power to eject them from their livings. They boast of their independence of the people, as one of the chief beauties of their system ; and they may boast of their independence of the bishop, for it is equally positive. Let the bishop bring a

guilty clergyman before his tribunal; convict and sentence him to deprivation; he turns upon his diocesan with the stubborn truth, that his living is his freehold, in many cases a purchased freehold, and who shall deprive him of it? Let attempt be made to carry the sentence into effect, the delinquent will appeal from court to court, till the costs amount to from four to seven thousand pounds, and which he knows how to cast entirely on the bishop. Such a power of expulsion is, in fact, no power at all. Bishop Porteus tried it, and it has been tried in a few instances since, but prelates in general know better how to spend their revenues, and so all control of the clergy becomes a dead letter.

Thus, having shewn that the whole English hierarchy, with its courts and officers, exists merely for splendour, for political and personal objects, we must now contemplate,

#### THE PARISH CLERGY.

A foreigner, well acquainted with the general character of Englishmen; who had learnt our love of freedom, the license of remark assumed by our newspapers, and our feverish anxiety for the purity of parliamentary and other elections, would stand in astonishment when he came to inquire into the mode of appointing our national teachers of religion. After having seen the jealous care with which we cling to every imagined right, what must be his amaze to find that we most readily abandon all right of judgment in the choice of the teachers of religion, and that to the most stupid, wicked, and venal of the community!

The privilege of choosing its own ministers of religion is snatched from the country, by the sordid, the ignorant, the worldly-minded; by the distant, the unknown, by anybody but itself, and yet it bears it without resentment. It sees the dissenters exercising this right, and flourishing under it, yet it feels no shame, and is not roused to self-vindication. It sees its church livings openly sold to the highest bidder, however unqualified or profligate, and the whole land thus polluted with simony.

“The commerce in the souls of men,” says Mr. Scott, in his *Commentary on the Revelation*, “is the most infamous of all traffics that the demon of avarice ever devised, but by no means uncommon. . . . The slave trade, cruel, unrighteous, and hateful as it is, is not the worst traffic of our land—for the souls of men are traded for by those who take the care of them, for the sake of the emoluments, and the abundance of the delicacies obtained by it; and then, either leave them to perish in ignorance, or poison them by heresy, or lead them on the road to hell by a profligate example.” “A clergyman,” says the author of *Ecclesiastical Reform*, “upon his institution, swears that he gave not the least consideration whatever, either himself directly or indirectly, nor any person for him, with his privity, knowledge, or consent, when perhaps he had been

personally treating with the patron for the purchase, and even present at the payment of the money. I was witness to a notorious instance, in the diocese of Lincoln, where both patron and incumbent were present at the payment ; yet the latter, a few days after, took the simoniacal oath, without a scruple, and now resides upon that benefice, near Atherston, in Warwickshire."

But this is a thing notorious. In general, no decency or precaution is taken in the bargains : when there is any sense of shame, or tenderness of conscience left, a man's friend, or lawyer, buys the living, and presents him to it : he has ONLY to pay the money, and swear that he has not paid it !

"Why," asks a writer in Blackwood's Magazine, after a similar question respecting the bishops, "is this stripling invested with an important dignity in the church ? He is the illegitimate son of a member of the royal family ; or he is the same of some nobleman ; or he belongs to some family which, in consideration of it, will give the ministry a certain number of votes in parliament. And why is this man endowed with a valuable benefice ? He has potent interest ; or it will prevent him giving further support to measures for injuring the church ; or he has voted at an election for a ministerial candidate ; or his connexions have much election influence ; or he is a political tool of the ministry. . . . The disposal of church patronage in this manner is not the exception, but the rule : it is not a matter of secrecy, or one which escapes observation ; it is looked upon as a thing of course ; and so far has the monstrous abuse been sanctioned by custom, that, while no one expects to see a vacancy in the church filled according to merit, the filling of it in the most profligate way scarcely provokes reprobation. . . .

"These are some of the inevitable consequences.—In the first place, the office of clergyman is sought by the very last people who ought to receive it. Before it is decided that a youth shall be a barrister, a physician, an officer in the army, or even a member of a mechanical trade, it is ascertained that he possesses the requisite ability and turn of mind ; but his lack of these is too often the reason on which it is decided that he shall be a clergyman. However brainless or profligate he may be, he must still enter into holy orders, because his friends have property or interest in the church. Perhaps they select him for it in preference to his brothers, because he happens to be the dunce of the family. While the most improper men are thus impelled to enter into holy orders, the most fitting men are restricted from it. What can the man of talent and piety hope for as a clergyman, if he be destitute of fortune and friends ? Preferment is to him impossible ; his merit alone is a positive bar to it. He can scarcely regard a curacy as an attainable matter,—for his ability might make him too popular ; his integrity might incapacitate him for joining in an illegal bargain ; and his piety might bring on him the imputation of evangelism. To give all this the most com-

prehensive powers of mischief, almost any man may, so far as concerns ability and character, gain admission to holy orders. A clergyman may be destitute of religious feeling; he may be grossly immoral; he may discharge his duties in the most incompetent manner, and lose his flock;—he may almost do anything short of legal crime, and still he will neither forfeit his living, nor draw upon himself any punishment. . . . Can a single reason be urged, why this monstrous state of things should be continued?"

This, surely, will be enough for any man of reason or feeling; a description of the church, made by its own friends, representing it more pernicious, profligate, and nationally disgraceful, than any church which ever existed, scarcely excepting the papal in its worst days. Mr. Acaster does not hesitate to declare that, unless unhopèd-for reformation comes, it must speedily fall.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE CHURCH OF IRELAND.

HOWEVER vicious may be the constitution, and gorgeous and expensive the priesthood, of the English church, it is far exceeded, in both respects, by the established church in the kingdom of Ireland.

For the government of the whole church of England, twenty-six archbishops and bishops exist—for 500,000 Irish Protestants there are twenty-two! According to former returns, there are 1238 parochial benefices; according to the present, 1401, in which are 860 resident clergymen. To provide for these archbishops and bishops, who superintend about as many people as one bishop in England would very well manage, it is calculated that out of 14,603,473 statute acres under cultivation, 13,603,473 are tithed. The glebe of the parochial clergy varies from 300 to 40,000 acres. The glebe in the diocese of Derry, alone, amounts to more than 17,000 acres. Indeed, the glebes, it is calculated, in Derry and Kilmore alone, would, if equally divided, give twenty acres to every parish in Ireland. Mr. Wakefield estimates that the property of six of the bishops, when out of lease, would produce 580,000*l.* a-year;—a sum which would give an income of 500*l.* a-year for each of the clergy, and a fund for the establishment of a school in every parish in Ireland. But if the property of six bishops amounts to 580,000*l.* a year, what becomes of the clerical calculation which makes the whole income of the Irish church but 800,000*l.*?—leaving to the whole body of parochial clergy and sixteen bishops, little more than 200,000*l.*

The following is an extract from the returns to the House of Commons, in February, 1824:—

Sees.	Acres.	Sees.	Acres.
Derry . . .	94,836	Tuam . . .	49,281
Armagh . . .	63,470	Elphin . . .	31,017
Kilmore. . .	51,350	Clogher . . .	32,817
Dublin . . .	28,784	Cork and Ross	22,755
Meath . . .	18,374	Cashel . . .	12,800
Ossory . . .	13,391	Killaloe . . .	11,081

Total, 439,953 acres; which, at 20s. per acre, give a rental of 439,953*l*.

If we estimate the remaining ten bishoprics at one-third of the amount, there is 146,651,—a rental of diocesan lands of 586,604*l*.

If we estimate the glebes at 100,000 acres, which is probably far too little, when the glebe of Derry alone exceeds 17,000 acres, and the parochial glebes vary from 300 to 40,000 acres, at 20s., here is 100,000*l*.

The tithe of upwards of 13,000,000 acres, at only 2s., a tithe of the rental, not of the gross produce, would be 1,300,000*l*.—making a total of income for the Irish church, of 1,986,604*l*.\*

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\* Mr. Leader, in a speech in parliament, December 15th, 1832, calculating on these returns, made the amount nearly the same. If, therefore, the last returns of 800,000*l*. be correct, we must ask, what has become of a vast quantity of property? The same question strangely presents itself to our minds, as regards the English church. The editor of the Extraordinary Black Book, says, “The returns to the circular inquiries by the Board of Agriculture, make the tithe, throughout the kingdom, in 1790, average, per acre, 4s. 0½*d*.; in 1803, 5s. 3½*d*.; in 1813, 7s. 9½*d*. Adopting the rate of tithes of 1803, and taking, with the Quarterly Reviewer, the land in tillage at 31,795,200 acres, the whole amount of tithes collected is 10,267,200*l*.; from which, if we deduct one-third for lay-tithes and tithe-free land, the amount of church tithes is 6,844,800*l*. per annum.” If, therefore, the church tithe alone, in 1803, was nearly 7,000,000*l*., and the whole income of the church, in 1833, is but about THREE MILLIONS AND A HALF, where, we must demand, has an immense amount of church property vanished? Nothing will ever elicit the real amount of church revenue, except a LAY COMMISSION: and the kicking of the Tories and the Church against the present demand by ministers for a return of tithes, strengthens this conviction. Should any one think this opinion unjust to the clergy, we refer them to the returns of the Commissioners of public Charities, which exhibit the clergy as the most wholesale and unscrupulous betrayers of their trust in these endowments; having, in a majority of instances, engrossed to themselves the revenues bequeathed to the poor, to teach the young, and provide for the old.



As women's fortunes are said to be paid in sixpences, so when the incomes of the clergy are returned to government, they seem to be calculated in farthings, or something less. Tithe and glebe seem suddenly to lose their natural value, surplice fees and fines shrink into insignificance. Yet these fines are pretty things, though they do not always amount to so much as the present Bishop of Durham is stated, on the authority of Mr. Beverly, to have received of Mrs. Beaumont, for the renewal of the lease of her lead mines—72,000*l*.

But, admitting that in consequence of the low rate of clerical leases, of waste land, of lay impropriation, and of the popular inability or repugnance to pay tithes, the income of the church falls far below this estimate; the question, so far as the country is concerned, is the same. Here is a monstrous amount of property appropriated to a certain purpose; and what good is done?—What good, indeed, as it regards Ireland?—A prodigious waste of property (for in addition to all the rest, it appears that, at different times since the Union, about half a million has been voted to augment poor livings), only to render the name of Protestant hateful to that nation, by the laziness, non-residence, and tithe-exactions of the clergy of a church, which the *Edinburgh Review*, some years ago, happily compared to an Irish regiment of volunteers, which consisted of sixteen lieutenant-colonels, two drummers, and one private! The same journal has well remarked, that “whatever may be the supposed effects of a richly-endowed church, in maintaining a particular creed, it is evidently not the machine for the conversion of a people.” If Protestantism is to prosper in Ireland, it must not come before the people in the shape of a corporation, chartered in opposition to the predominant feelings of the country, and endowed with a vast portion of the people's wealth; it must not come in the shape of two-and-twenty archbishops and bishops, to superintend some few hundred clergymen, on incomes of 10,000*l*. a-year; in the shape of tithe-fed clergymen without parishes, parishes without churches, and churches without people; in the shape of men who profess to be teachers of Christian meekness and love, but are seen only as zealous collectors of tithes; in the shape of tithe-proctors, with troops of soldiery at their heels; in the shape of noonday exaction, and midnight rataliation and revenge; in short, of wealth and violence on the one hand, and destitution and despair on the other. If it come really to prosper and to bless, it must come as Christ himself came—as a free personification of disinterested kindness; zealous love for the souls of men, rather than their purses; active endeavour to soothe the irritation and enlighten the minds of the poor; it must be offered to men's hearts, but not thrust upon their shoulders; it must stand before the public eye, as a thing to be chosen or refused; as a thing which invites observation, and can bear it; as a thing which obviously has no interest but what is blended with the whole happiness of man;—whose nobility is so striking, and whose beauty so attractive, that hearts are drawn to its embraces, not crushed

beneath its tread. The system of compulsion and lavish endowment has been tried long enough ; long enough has state religion, to use Burke's sophistical metaphor, " reared its mitred front in courts and parliaments ;" its effects are before the public, in characters of fire and blood ! Instead of peace, we have horrible anarchy—instead of the milk of human kindness, deadly exasperation, and relentless murder. In God's name let us see what the system of the apostles will now do !—a free offer,—an open hand,—and a zealous heart ! —a system less of the bag and scrip, than of virtues and arguments that address themselves to the wants, the understanding, and the generosity of a generous nation.

## CHAPTER IV.

### WEALTH OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

WE have only glanced incidentally at some of the sources of ecclesiastical revenue. We may now more particularly notice this important item in the catalogue of evils pertaining to the English Church.

The writers on behalf of the clergy insist that their opponents greatly exaggerate the amount of the ecclesiastical revenues ; and aver, that if they were equally divided, they would give but about 112*l.* per annum to each clergyman. The British or Clerical Magazine (March 1822) admits, from the Parliamentary Returns, that it would be 200*l.* per annum.\* If this be correct, what a shame it is, that in a church so economically provided, so many individuals should be allowed to wallow in wealth and idleness. What a scandal is it, that in such a slenderly beneficed system, there should be many a parish priest who holds from 1000*l.* to 5000*l.* a-year ; and that the scale of payment to its dignitaries should stand thus, according to their own shewing :—

Archbishop of Canterbury .	£27,000 a-year.
————— York . . .	10,000 —
Bishop of Durham . . .	17,000 —
————— London . . .	14,000 —
————— Winchester . . .	14,000 —
————— Ely . . . . .	12,000 —
Nine others, on an average .	5,000 —
The rest, on an average . . .	3,000 —

But if we take, as the basis of our calculations, the value of the bishoprics as given in Liber Regis, they would appear as below. Those estimates were made when labour was a penny a day ; now it is twenty-four pence ; so that if we place pounds instead of shillings ; that is, an advance of twenty fold, we shall make a

\* The present Parliamentary Returns make it about 287*l.*

moderate calculation, according to the increase in the value of general property; and if of general property, why not of that of the church? When this scale is applied to parochial livings whose income is well known, the result has been wonderfully accurate. The bishop of London's income will alone form an exception; for according to the statement of Mr. Baring in Parliament, it has increased seventy-fold, and by the falling in of leases, will soon be a hundred fold.

Archbishop of Canterbury .	£56,650 a-year.
————— York . . .	23,200 —
Bishop of Durham . . .	36,420 —
————— London . . .	70,000 —
————— Winchester . . .	57,479 —
————— Ely . . .	42,698 —
————— Salisbury . . .	27,700 —
The rest, on an average .	10,000* —

The church has never been indifferent to the doctrine, that "godliness is great gain." There is nothing in which the spirit of priestcraft has shewn itself so grossly in the English clergy, as in their appropriation of what is called Queen Anne's Bounty. The most shameful selfishness and dishonesty mark the whole affair. The Edinburgh Review, in an able article (No. LXXV), made a very salutary exposition of this business. Let the reader take this condensed view of it;—

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\* Mr. Archdeacon Wilkins, in a virulent attack upon the History of Priestcraft, having charged me with overstating the property and income of the church, as proved by "the fuller and more correct estimates of the Chancellor of the Exchequer," is thus replied to, in the "Vindication:"—It was but last week that his Lordship confessed that his ecclesiastical estimates had misled him! I felt convinced that this would be the case; first, from the wondrously small sum made of it by clerical calculation, as opposed to all other calculations; and secondly, by the temptation of the clergy to do so; and by their known carelessness of truth. Start not at the imputation—I shall presently shew you are not an exception—and I shall shew, moreover, other curious matter. I doubt the accuracy of the clerical returns on this ground:—when the government circular was sent to the clergy, demanding an exact and faithful return of their incomes, then did these conscientious men set eagerly to work to concert how this return was to be made, and how it was to be made to appear as small as possible. These matters will be found particularly discussed in the numbers of the British Magazine for June, July, and Sept. 1832.—One man seems wonderfully aggrieved that he is not permitted, by the queries of the Church Revenue Commission, to deduct from his income, before given in, the salary of the curate; the poor's-rates that his tithe-holders pay for him; and a rent for his house; but thinks he may venture to

“ It is well known that, by the statute of Henry VIII. chap. 3, the first-fruits and tenths of spiritual preferments (which had formerly been paid to the Pope, or some other spiritual person) were given to the king. The first-fruits were the revenues and profits for one year, of every such preferment, and were to be satisfied, or compounded for on good security, by each incumbent, before any actual or real possession, or meddling with the profits of a benefice. The tenths were a yearly rent of a tenth part of all the revenues and emoluments of all preferments, to be paid by each incumbent at Christmas. These revenues were, as the statute phrases it, united and knit to the imperial crown for ever ! By the same statute a provision was made for a commission to be issued by the king’s highness, his heirs and successors, from time to time, to search for the just and true value of the said first-fruits and profits ; and similar means were provided for ascertaining the value of tenths. In consequence of this statute, which was suspended during the papistical reign of Mary, but recovered by the 1st of Elizabeth, a valuation was made, which is supposed to have been at the time an accurate one, of the yearly profits of the ecclesiastical preferments : and, according to this valuation, the first-fruits and tenths were, as the 1st of Elizabeth has it, ‘ well and justly answered and paid, without grief and contradiction of the prelates and clergy of the realm, to the great aid, relief, and supportation of the inestimable charges of the crown,’ which inestimable charges may then possibly have amounted to a two-hundredth part of the present yearly sum.

“ Under this valuation, which in course of time became quite unequal to the real emoluments of the preferments, these charges continued to be paid till the second year of Queen Anne, 1703 ; when an act was passed reciting the queen’s most religious and tender concern for the church of England, stating that a sufficient settled provision for the clergy in many parts of the realm had never yet been made ; and giving to a corporation, which was to be erected for the augmentation of small livings, the whole of the first-fruits and tenths. Her Majesty, however, in her religious and tender concern, was completely overreached by the clergy. The professed object of the queen was to increase the provision of the poor clergy : the real and only immediate effect of it was to release the rich clergy from a charge to which, by law, they were liable. We have before maintained, that a provision was made in

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deduct the charge of collecting his income : and others think they may deduct their charities ; and others the interest of the purchase-money of the advowson of their livings ! By these various means some of them actually throw their livings into debt to themselves ; as one, for instance, in the June number, 1754. Let it be remembered that these generous fellows, who thus magnanimously maintain their own livings—yet shew, that those livings are not worth less, in the gross, than five or six hundred a year.

the statute of Henry VIII., for revising, from time to time, the valuations under which the first-fruits and tenths were paid. It is not improbable that the clergy were apprehensive, as the nation was then engaged in an expensive war, that such a revision might be made; and in persuading the queen to renounce her hereditary revenue for the sake of her poor clergy, they contrived most effectually to secure themselves by an ingenious clause in the statute in question.

"If the real purpose of this act of Anne had been to augment the small livings, nothing could have been more reasonable than to do it by enforcing the legal claims for the first-fruits and tenths on the holders of the larger benefices. The scandalous poverty of some livings—for there were then 1071 which did not exceed 10*l.* a year—would then have speedily disappeared: but as the old and inefficient rate of payment was fixed and made perpetual, the most religious queen went to her grave without seeing any effect from her bounty; as, in consequence of the incumbrances on the fund, and the impossibility of increasing its produce, it was not till 1714, that the governors of the bounty were enabled to make their first grants.

"The cunning of the rich clergy in thus shifting from themselves the burden of contributing to the relief of their poorer brethren, is only to be matched in degree by the folly shewn in the application of the diminished revenue which this trick of theirs still left for the improvement of small livings. At the time when Queen Anne's Bounty Fund was established there was, according to the returns, which were not quite accurate, 5597 livings in England and Wales, with incomes not exceeding 50*l.* They were thus classed:—

Not exceeding 10 <i>l.</i>	. 1071	Not exceeding 40 <i>l.</i>	. 1049
" " 20 <i>l.</i>	. 1467	" " 50 <i>l.</i>	. 889
" " 30 <i>l.</i>	. 1126		

"The sum which the governors of Queen Anne's Bounty had to apply to the augmentation of these livings, averaged about 13,000*l.* a year. Any rational being would suppose that, under such circumstances, the governors and the legislature, by whom the disposal of the money was directed and superintended, would have made some inquiry into the circumstances of the different livings. Some of these livings were of very small extent, and scarcely any population, and might therefore have been advantageously united with one another, or with other parishes. The specific evil which was to be remedied was set forth in the preamble to the statute of Anne in these words:—'That divers mean and stipendiary preachers are, in many places, entertained to serve cures, and officiate there; who, depending for their necessary maintenance upon the good-will and liking of their hearers, have been, and are, thereby under temptation of too much complying, and suiting their doctrines and teaching to the humours, rather than to the good of their hearers, which has been a great occasion of faction and schism. Precious philosophy! At

least, therefore, one would have thought that some distinction would have been made between places where there were many hearers, and where there were few or none. Some even might have been so extravagant as to expect, that when a sum was bestowed on any particular living, some security would have been taken for the residence of the incumbent. All these notions were, however, very far from the minds of the persons who had the distribution of Queen Anne's Bounty. The governors of this fund proceeded upon the idea which is commonly entertained in England respecting the church establishment; especially by its own functionaries—that, provided a sufficient sum of money be laid out on the clergy, every other good will follow; that how absurd soever the distribution may seem, it is not for human hands to destroy the latent harmony of casual proportions. Above all things did they eschew the idea which the church abhors, that where the public confers an obligation, it has a right to exact the performance of a duty. Among the livings on which they had to scatter the money, several were large and populous parishes, where the tithes had been impropriated; and these, if the holders of the tithes were not, as is often the case, ecclesiastical sinecurists—or dignitaries as they are called—whose incomes were at the disposal of parliament, would have been proper objects for augmentation—always supposing, what is false in point of fact, that an increase in the emoluments of a living has any tendency to secure the performance of clerical duties. Others were rectories, of which some were endowed with the tithe of all the produce of their district, but which were so insignificant as neither to need a separate clergyman, nor to afford a separate maintenance for him. In the case of such livings, instead of attempting to swell the incomes of needless offices, the natural course would have been, to have consolidated the neighbouring benefices; and in no case have made any augmentation, except where the revenue arising from a district of extent and population sufficient to need the cares of a clergyman, should have been found insufficient to maintain him. But this would have violated the fundamental principles of the excellent Church; it would have insinuated a connexion between money expended and duty performed; it would have seemed like an adaptation of means to an end; it would have made some inquiry and consideration necessary.

“The governors of the Bounty proceeded bountifully; they distributed a part of their money in sums of 270*l.* on any poor livings to which any private person would give an equal sum. The rest and far greater part of their money, shewing them no respecter of persons nor of circumstances, these representatives of the ecclesiastical wisdom of the nation, distributed by lot, letting each poor living take an equal chance for a prize, without any regard to the degree of urgency of its claim. After this, the story of Bridoye deciding suits at law by dice, after making up a fair pile of papers on each side, seems no longer an extravaganza. Up to January 1,

1815, the governors had made, in this way, 7323 augmentations of 200*l.*; but with benefices as with men, fortune is not proportioned to desert or necessity. Some of the least populous parishes had a wonderful run of luck. We are not sure that, taking a few of those which meet our eye in running over the returns, we have selected the most remarkable. In the diocese of Chichester, the rectory of Hardham, which in 1811 contained eighty-nine persons, has received six augmentations by lot, or 1200*l.* The vicarage of Sollington, with forty-eight people, has had six augmentations, 1200*l.* In the diocese of Salisbury, Brewilham drew a prize; it contained fourteen people. Rotwood drew another; it had twelve people. Calloes had 1000*l.* including a benefaction of 200*l.*; its population was in 1811, nineteen. In the diocese of Winchester, Saint Swithin, with twenty-four people, has received 800*l.* including a benefaction of 200*l.*; and 200*l.* has been expended on Ewhurst, which has seven people. In the diocese of York, Ruthewick, with sixty-two people, has had five prizes, 1000*l.*; while Armby, with 2941 people, and Allendale, with 3884, have gained only one each. In the diocese of Rochester, two livings, with twenty-eight and twenty-nine people, received separate augmentations. In the diocese of Oxford, Elford, or Yelford, with sixteen inhabitants, drew a prize. In Lincoln, Stowe, with the same number, and Haugh, received 800*l.* The number of all its inhabitants is eight. When it is considered too, that Haugh pays vicarial tithes, which amounted in the reign of Henry VIII. to 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* of yearly value, it must be admitted that this important district has been guarded against the danger of schism, with a liberality worthy of a Protestant government. If the rest of the people of England were fortified in sound doctrine, at the same rate of expense, the proper establishment of religious teachers in England and Wales would cost about 1200 millions sterling; and 1,500,000 parochial clergy, who, as Dr. Cove allows each of them a family of nine, would form a considerable portion of the population. In the diocese of Llandaff we find two places following each other in the returns, which illustrate the equity of '*le sort des dez.*' Usk, with 1339 people, has had an augmentation, though its value remains low. Wilcock, a rectory with twenty-eight people, has had three. In Hereford, Hoptoncangeford has had 1000*l.* for thirty-five people. Monmouth, 200*l.* for 3503.

"Even in cities, where the scattered condition of the population could afford no pretext against the union of parishes, the same plan of augmentations has been pursued. In Winchester, separate augmentations have been given to seven parishes, the population of all which would, united, have amounted to 2376, and would consequently have formed a very manageable, and rather small town parish. In short, the whole of the returns printed by the House of Commons in 1815, (No. 115), teem with instances of the most foolish extravagance,—just such a result as the original conception of this clerical little-go would have led any rational being to anti-

cipate. The conviction is irresistibly forced upon us, that nothing could have been further from the minds of those who superintended this plan, than to secure a competent provision for all the members of the church, and to remove the poverty of some of its members,—which is, by a strange manner of reasoning, made a defence for the needless profusion with which the public wealth is lavished upon others. Indeed, we are led to suspect, that ‘the church, in her corporate capacity,’ looks upon the poverty of some of her members as sturdy beggars look upon their sores; she is not seriously displeased with the naked and excoriated condition of her lower extremities, so long as it excites an ill-judged compassion for the whole body, and secures her impunity in idleness and rapacity.

“We are sometimes told that the poverty of a large body of the parochial clergy is such that it is out of the power of the higher clergy, even by the surrender of their whole revenues, to remedy it. The statement we have given shews most clearly that this poverty is to be attributed, in the first place, to the fraudulent subtraction of the higher clergy from the burden of contributing to the relief of their poorer brethren; and, in the second place, to the absurdity of the ecclesiastical division of the kingdom, which, on the slightest effort of the clergy, would have been remedied by the legislature. If the first-fruits and tenths had been paid subsequently to the gift of Anne, according to the rate which the law provided for, and as they had been paid, ‘without grief or contradiction,’ i. e. according to the real value of the benefices, instead of a million and a half, at least thirty millions would have been raised from these taxes; a sum not only quite sufficient to have removed the poverty of all the poor livings in the kingdom, but to have established schools in every parish of England, and to have left a large surplus for other useful purposes.

“In the course of these augmentations no security has been taken against non-residence, or plurality. The governors go on, therefore, increasing the incomes of two small livings, in order to make each of them capable of supporting a resident clergyman; while after, as well as before, the augmentation, one incumbent may hold them together—reside on neither—and allow only a small part of the accumulated income to a curate, who performs the duty of both!”

This absurd system, which is at once an insult to the memory of Queen Anne, and to the whole British nation, has been continued to the present moment. By the returns made to the present parliament, the same shameful additions to rich livings, of that which was intended to have gone to poor ones, are made apparent; the same shamelessly miserable payment of the curates, who do the actual work for which the money is received by the selfish and the idle, has been continued. It is not within the compass of this volume to go at great length into these details;—a sample will suffice. These cases were lately adduced by Lord King in the House of Peers.



“Dean and Canon of Windsor, impropiator of the following parishes, received from parliamentary grant and Queen Anne’s Bounty: Plymsted, 1811, 600*l.*; 1812, 400*l.*; 1815, 300*l.*; Plympton, —, 600*l.* St. German’s, 1811, 800*l.*; 1814, 400*l.* Wembury, 1807, 200*l.*; 1816, 1400*l.* Northam, 1764, 200*l.*; 1812, 400*l.* South Moulton, 1813, 600*l.*

“Dean and Canon of Winchester, impropiators of tithes of two large parishes in Wales:—Holt, 1725, 200*l.*; 1733, 200*l.* Iscoyd, 1749, 200*l.*; 1757, 200*l.*; 1798, 200*l.*; 1818, 200*l.*

“Dean of Exeter, impropiator of tithe:—Landkey, 1775, 200*l.*; 1810, 200*l.*; 1815, 1400*l.* Swimbed, 1750, 200*l.*; 1811, 400*l.*

“Dean and Chapter of Carlisle, impropiators of valuable tithe:—Hesket, 1813, 600*l.*; 1815, 2000*l.* to purchase land; 1816, 300*l.*; 1817, 300*l.*

“Dean of Bangor, impropiator of tithe (curate paid 32*l.* 4*s.*):—Gyffin, 1767, 200*l.*; 1810, 200*l.*; 1816, 1400*l.*

“Bishop of Bangor, impropiator of valuable tithe (curate paid 30*l.* 12*s.*):—Llandegar, 1812, 200*l.*; 1815, 1600*l.*; —, 300*l.*; —, 300*l.*

“Bishop of Litchfield, impropiator of large tithes in Merionethshire (curate paid only 27*l.*):—Tallylyr, 1808, 200*l.*; 1816, 1400*l.* Penal, 1810, 200*l.*”

Thus these returns proved, that for thirteen parishes these Rev. Gentlemen had drawn 14,500*l.* which ought to have been paid from their own pockets!

The Edinburgh Review, in the same article above quoted, says,—“Those who complain of the poverty of the clergy, pretend to suppose that no security for residence is necessary; and, that as soon as the small livings are raised high enough, non-residence will disappear as a matter of course. For instance, Dr. Cove says, ‘all the church of England’s sons are, with few exceptions, ever intent on their appropriate duties; and would be still more diligent were each of them possessed of a more enlarged and comfortable independence, and furnished with more suitable abodes.’ This, unfortunately for the doctor, is more capable of being brought to the test than the ‘unrecorded revelation’ to Adam in favour of tithes. We have returns of small livings, and we have returns of non-residence. In the diocese of Rochester there are only six livings under 150*l.* a year, and of those six, not one is returned under 110*l.* Of the 107 benefices returned in that diocese, there were, in 1809, but 50 with resident incumbents—less than half the livings. In the diocese of Chester, where the livings under 150*l.* a year are numerous, 377 out of 592 being of that description, a considerably larger proportion of the benefices have residents than in Rochester—there are 327 residents. In other dioceses the number of poor livings bears no regular proportion to the number of non-residents. The fact is, that under the discipline of the church of England, where there are so many grounds of exemption or of license for non-residence, the only

persons who may be expected to reside, are those whose narrow incomes make their residence in their own parsonages a matter of necessity or convenience.

The following statement from the Carlisle Journal will afford a striking example of the shameless pluralities of the higher clergy, and of the miserable manner of their paying the poor labouring curates.

" Small as is the see of Carlisle, it affords some admirable specimens of the working of the church system, and of these we will now give a sample. And first of the pluralists, we have—

" Hugh Percy, bishop of Carlisle, a prebend of St. Paul's, and a Chancellor of Sarum.

" R. Hodgson, dean of Carlisle, vicar of Burgh-on-Sands, rector of St. George's, Hanover-square, and vicar of Hillington.

" E. Goodenough, prebend of Carlisle, Westminster, and York ; vicar of Wath All Saints on Dearn, chaplain of Adwick, and chaplain of Brompton-Bierlow.

" S. J. Goodenough, prebend of Carlisle, rector of Broughton Poges, vicar of Hampton, and deputy lord-lieutenant of Cumberland.

" Wm. Goodenough, archdeacon of Carlisle, rector of Marcham-le-Fen, and rector of Great Salkeld.

" W. Vansittart, D. D., prebend of Carlisle, master of Wigston's Hospital, Leicester, vicar of Waltham Abbas, and vicar of Shottesbrooke.

" W. Fletcher, chancellor of the diocese of Carlisle, prebend of York, vicar of Bromfield, vicar of Dalston, and vicar of Lazenby.

" It is not our intention, at present, to inquire into the incomes of these dignitaries ; but as they are pretty considerable, it may be worth while just to contrast the salaries they award to those who really work, with the moneys they receive from the livings. The tithes received by the Dean and Chapter for Hesketh, amount to 1000*l.*, or 1500*l.* a year ; they pay to the curate who does the duty 18*l.* 5*s.* a year !—that is to say, 1*s.* a day—being after the rate of the bricklayer's labourer's wages ! In Wetheral and Warwick, the Dean and Chapter draw about 1000*l.* a year from tithes, and 1000*l.* a year from the church lands ; and they pay the working minister (probably one of the most exemplary and beloved men in England in his station) the sum of 50*l.* a year—half the wages of a journeyman cabinet-maker ! The tithes of the parish of St. Cuthbert and St. Mary, amount at the least to 1500*l.* a year. The two curates (who do the duty) receive each the sum of 2*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* a year !!! And then, to the minor canons, who do the cathedral duty (such as it is), they pay the sum of 6*s.* 8*d.* a year each ! The Dean and Chapter hold several other impropriate rectories, pay the curates a mere nominal sum for performing the duties, and pocket the tithes themselves—for doing nothing !

" The Rev. W. Pullen, rector of Little Gidding, Huntingdonshire,

asserts in a pamphlet of his, that a late bishop held twelve places of preferment at the same time, and the greater number parochial benefices !”

Who can believe that the British public can much longer suffer this church to remain ? Look where we will, we behold the most gross instances of simony, pluralities, non-residence, and penurious remuneration of the working clergy.

Another source of gain to the clergy, are the ecclesiastical courts. Englishmen are, indeed, a most patient race ! An ecclesiastical court is a dark and mysterious assemblage, as of bats and owls. A sort of inquisition, shorn of its power by public opinion, and yet suffered by public opinion to exist ! Priests are no longer allowed to summon men to their hidden tribunals, and rack their persons ; but they are still permitted to seize on their wills with rude hands, and rack their purses without mercy ! Clerical peers and clerical legislators are anomalous enough ; but clerical taxers of orphans, and clerical guardians of testamentary documents, are still more anomalous. Here is a popish institution existing in a protestant country, which even popish countries have abandoned, and conveyed its functions into the hands of laymen ! Our wise Saxon ancestors suffered nothing of this kind amongst them : it is true, they permitted bishops to take their seats in the civil courts, to protect their own rights ; but it remained for the Norman invader to concede to Rome this dangerous privilege of clerical courts. Time and knowledge have thrown into disuetude most of those powers by which they harassed our forefathers. They no longer trouble themselves about the reformation of manners, or the punishing of heresy ; nor do churchwardens care to present scandalous livers to the bishop : but refuse to pay a fee, and they will speedily “curse thee to thy face.” They are, in fact, a sort of obscure and dusty incorporations, for collecting and enjoying good revenues, under the names of bishop, surrogates, proctors, registrars, deputy-registrars, and so forth, from fees on wills, consecrations, and various other sources and immunities.

To see what troublesome and extortionate nuisances these courts are, it is only necessary to consult the voluminous returns made to parliament, in 1829. Amongst the lesser evils of the system are the consecration of burial grounds, and what are called surplice fees. Nothing is more illustrative of the spirit of priestcraft, than that the church should have kept up the superstitious belief in the consecration of ground, and that, in spite of education, the poor and the rich should be ridden with the most preposterous notion, that they cannot lie in peace except in ground over which the bishop has said his mummary, and for which he and his rooks, as Sir David Lindsay calls them, have pocketed the fees, and laughed in their sleeves at the gullible foolishness of the people. When will the day come, when the webs of the clerical spider shall be torn, not only from the limbs, but from the souls of men ? Does the honest Quaker sleep less

sound, or will he arise less cheerfully at the judgment-day from his grave, over which no prelatical jugglery has been practised, and for which neither prelate nor priest pocketed a doit? Who has consecrated the sea, into which the British sailor in the cloud of battle-smoke descends, or who goes down, amidst the tears of his comrades, to depths to which no plummet but that of God's omnipresence ever reached? Who has consecrated the battle-field, which opens its pits for its thousands and tens of thousands; or the desert, where the weary traveller lies down to his eternal rest? Who has made holy the sleeping-place of the solitary missionary, and of the settlers in new lands? Who but He whose hand has hallowed earth from end to end, and from surface to centre—for his pure and Almighty fingers have moulded it! Who but He whose eye rests on it day and night, watching its myriads of moving children—the oppressors and the oppressed—the deceivers and the deceived—the hypocrites, and the poor, whose souls are darkened with false knowledge, and fettered with the bonds of daring selfishness? and on whatever innocent thing that eye rests, it is hallowed beyond the breath of bishops, and the fees of registrars. Who shall need to look for a consecrated spot of earth to lay his bones in, when the struggles and the sorrows, the prayers and the tears of our fellow men, from age to age, have consecrated every atom of this world's surface to the desire of a repose which no human hands can lead to, no human rites can secure? Who shall seek for a more hallowed bed than the bosom of that earth into which Christ himself descended, and in which the bodies of the thousands of glorious patriarchs, and prophets, and martyrs, who were laid in gardens, and beneath their paternal trees, and of heroes, whose blood and sighs have flowed forth for their fellow men, have been left to peace, and the blessings of grateful generations, with no rites, no sounds, but the silent falling of tears, and the aspirations of speechless, but immortal thanks? The whole world is sanctified by these agencies, beyond the blessings or the curses of priests! God's sunshine flows over it—his providence surrounds it; it is rocked in his arms, like the child of his eternal love; his faithful creatures live, and toil, and pray in it; and, in the name of heaven, who shall make it, or who can need it holier, for his last resting couch! But the greediness of priests persists in cursing the poor with extortionate expenses, and calls them blessings. The poor man, who all his days goes groaning under the load of his ill-paid labours, cannot even escape from them into the grave, except at a dismal charge to his family; his native earth is not allowed to receive him into her bosom, till he has satisfied the priest and his satellites. With the exception of Jews, Quakers, and some few other dissenters, every man is given up in England as a prey, in life and in death, to the parson, and his echo, and his disturber 'of bones.

The following, from the Leeds Mercury, is not quite a fair example of the expense incurred for what is called the consecration of

the smallest addition to a burial-ground—for in some dioceses the charge is 45*l.*, and, it is said, the charge for the consecration of a church has often been from 100*l.* to 300*l.*

To the churchwardens of Tadcaster was sent the following letter :—

(COPY).

“ Gentlemen,—I send you enclosed the charges on the consecration of the additional churchyard at Tadcaster.

I am, Gentlemen, your obedient servant,  
York, 26th March, 1829. JOSEPH BUCKLE.”

Fees on consecration of the additional Burial-ground at Tadcaster, 1828.		£	s.	d.
Drawing and engrossing the petition to the Archbishop to consecrate . . . . .		1	5	0
Drawing and engrossing the sentence of consecration . . . . .		2	2	0
Drawing the Act . . . . .		0	13	6
Registering the above instruments and the deed at length, and parchment . . . . .		2	2	0
The Chancellor's fee . . . . .		5	0	0
The principal Registrar's fee . . . . .		5	0	0
The Secretary's fee . . . . .		5	0	0
The Deputy Registrar's attendance and expenses . . . . .		3	15	6
The Apparator's fee . . . . .		1	1	0
Fee on obtaining the seal . . . . .		1	1	0
Carriage . . . . .		0	5	0
		£	27	5 0

For burying a poor man, this is the common scale of charge in this town :—For the burial of even a pauper, 7*s.* 6*d.*—for a child six months old, the same—if the child be not baptized, 1*s.*; for in that state, it is, by clerical logic, deemed not a human being, but a thing, until their mummery has ennobled it—a thing beneath God's notice—it is therefore thrust into any hole by the sexton. In the principal churchyard, a man who wishes to choose the place of burial, must pay 10*l.* for the size of a grave; and for opening such a grave, about 2*l.* 15*s.* 6*d.* For permission to lay down a flat stone, which used to be 1*l.* 1*s.*, now 3*l.* 3*s.*! For an upright stone 10*s.* 6*d.* For liberty to clean his father's gravestone, the vicar of Newark charged a man the other day, 2*s.* 6*d.* There is nothing connected with the church, but must be paid for. Besides the regular fee, the compliment of a guinea, or more, for a scarf, hat-band, and gloves, is not merely expected, but demanded. There are many instances, where clergymen have refused to take a corpse into the church, where these were denied.\* From opulent people,

\* Ay, and even when not denied, if the parties were poor. This

a compliment of five guineas is looked for at marriages ; at christenings, a guinea. By this greediness of filthy lucre, our finest ecclesiastical buildings, and professedly the temples of God, are degraded into regular shew-shops ; especially those magnificent piles, St. Paul's Cathedral, and Westminster Abbey. These noble buildings, to which are attached immense revenues, are not merely made traps for daily gains from a laudable curiosity, but of enormous sums on public occasions ; particularly the coronations, in the latter, bring mines of gold to the chapter. But we digress.—For opening a vault, even in a village churchyard, 5*l.* is commonly demanded ; in the church, 10*l.* ; and what is worst, after all, it has been proved by more than one legal decision, no man's family vault is sacred and inviolable. The church and churchyard are the parson's freehold. In them, during his life, he can work his own will : and there are numbers of families who flatter themselves that they had a place of family sepulture, into which no stranger can intrude, but who, having excited the wrath of some clerical parish tyrant, have been refused to place the dead in their vaults until his exorbitant demands have been satisfied. From root to branch, the whole system is rotten ;—GIVE ! GIVE ! GIVE ! is written on every wall and gate of the church : and though a man quits it and its communion altogether, he must still pay, in life and in death to it.

To this church, which empties the pockets of the poor, and stops the mouth of the conscientious dissenter, let every Englishmen do his duty.

## CHAPTER V.

### TITHES.

TITHES form one large source whence the revenues of the established church are drawn ; and a more injurious method for the support of

very week a poor man and his wife called on me in great distress, saying that they had just buried a child, and paid Archdeacon Wilkins, 7*s.* 6*d.* for performing the ceremony, a sum for which they must work hard half the week, and yet he refused them the poor consolation of taking the body into the church. I could only console them by reminding them that the child was in better hands than that of the Archdeacon—the hands of its Maker—the friend and avenger of the poor ! It may be added, that a friend of the Author attending a funeral at St. Nicolas's church in this town—the clerk came to him during the service, and inquired if there was a hatband for the priest ? if not, there would only be half service performed.

the church could not have been devised, had it been the object of the deviser to place an eternal subject of hatred, heart-burning, and dispute between the parson and his flock; and thus render abortive all his religious endeavours. A more iniquitous system, in truth, was never conceived, for it taxes not merely man's land, but his capital, his genius, his skill, and his industry; so that the priesthood reaps not merely a tithe of the fruits of the earth, but of the heart and mind of every man who ventures to till the earth.

The history of tithes is a singular one; for the protestant clergy have been sadly perplexed to make out any thing like a plausible title to this species of plunder, taken from the Roman Catholic Church. They have set up for them a right divine—a right constitutional—a right by possession;—and have in turn been compelled to surrender them all. Their divine right was based upon the Mosaic law, and a resort to such a plea, clearly demonstrated the difficulties by which they were hampered. The Almighty imposed the payment of tithes only on his own people, and that in favour of THE TRIBE OF LEVI. The PRIESTS, a particular family of that tribe, were only to receive of the Levites a tithe of their tithe; that is, a hundredth part; so that could our priests have proved us real Israelites, and bound to pay tithes, they could claim only a hundredth part; the ninety would go to the vergers and beadles; the cleansers and orderers of the temple. As this did not promise much, they therefore fell upon the constitutional or legislative right; and here they grounded their claims upon various enactments. The earliest were those of some of the kings of the Saxon Heptarchy, which only extended to their own portions of the empire, and were to be given by the people to what body of clergy, or religious house, they pleased. There was no general Act for their payment till the reign of John (about 1200), when the mode of appropriation was specifically defined, in obedience to the bull of Pope Innocent III. But their institution was so perfectly popish,—ordered by the pope himself, given by a popish monarch, and for most popish pretences, that no protestant clergy could ever set up any claim to them on these grounds. They were obtained in the first place by a species of holy swindling. They were granted, both by monarchs and private individuals, not for the maintenance of the church and religion, but for a private and selfish object,—for the expiation of enormous crimes, often crimes of blood, as in the case of Athelstan, king of the West Saxons, to pacify the soul of his murdered brother Edwin, of which he was supposed to be guilty; and of Edgar, cruel to citizens, a deflowerer of virgins, and concerned in the murder of Ethelwold, that he might possess his wife, Elfrida; of Canute, guilty of the blood of Edward and Edmund, sons of Ironside. The clergy had persuaded these, and all other men, that they could pray their souls out of purgatory, and remit the punishment of such heinous offences: and to obtain these services, the wealthy gave these pretended keepers of the keys of heaven and hell, the wages

of tithes. They were therefore so dyed in blood, that no reformed clergy could plead upon this title. But the gross delusion, by which they were obtained, was equally indefensible. In the midnight of popery, tithes were called THE SOUL'S RANSOM ; and were so preached up by the covetous clergy, that the credulous people gave them eagerly. Who indeed would deny the SOUL'S RANSOM,—endless life, if so to be purchased ? By this fraud the church got into possession of the third part of the land ; and but for the Statute of Mortmain, it is believed, they would have swallowed up the whole. That such was the origin of tithes ; that they were given, not with the pious view of affording an ecclesiastical maintenance, but in a private and selfish bargain for salvation, may be seen by any one who will examine the original grants. Here are specimens, from the reign of Henry II. :

“ Be it known to those that are present, and to those that shall succeed, that I, NICHOLAS, the son of TERROLD, FOR THE SALVATION OF MY SOUL, AND OF MY PARENT, etc., have granted to the church, to be held for ever, the TITHES of my land, which I possess in the village of CHILTUNE. ”

“ I, WILLIAM DE ALBINEIO, do grant unto God, and to ST. ANDREW OF ROCHESTER, and to the monks having residence there, all my TITHES, etc., for the soul of King WILLIAM ; and for the soul of King HENRY ; and for my own soul ; and for the souls of my father and mother ; and of my wife ; and of my brother NIGELLUS ; and of my brother HUMPHREY ; and for the souls of my other parents, alive and dead. ”

And this passage from the charter of King Stephen to the Priory of Eye, in Suffolk :

“ I, STEPHEN, by the grace of God, king of England, touched by the love of God, and for the salvation of my soul ; and of my father's soul, and of my mother's soul ; and of my ancestors, kings, do give unto God, and the church of ST. PETER OF EYE, and to the monks there serving God, that they may have all their profits, quiet and free from all exactions, in land, tithes, churches, possessions, etc. etc. ”

Having procured these possessions by hypocritical means, the priests were always ready to maintain possession of them by the same. This may be seen by the curious farces, got up to suit the gross ignorance of the age. Here is one :

“ St. Austin, coming to a certain place called Comiton to preach, the priest of the place made complaint against the lord of the manor, for detaining his tithes. For which thing Austin excommunicated him ; and, saying mass at the altar, forbade excommunicated persons to be present thereat. Presently, a dead corpse, buried one hundred and seventy years before, arose out of his grave, and stood afar off during the celebrating of holy mass. Austin asked him what he was. He said he was a man that, during his lifetime, would never pay tithes to the priest, so was excommunicated ; and



dying went to hell for the crime. Austin raised the dead priest, who affirmed that that man would never pay his tithe. Austin sent the live-dead corpse to his grave again, saying, he had suffered long in hell, that is, in purgatory. The lord of the manor seeing all this, was much terrified, and fell at Austin's feet, confessing his fault, and became a due payer of his tithes all his lifetime!"—*Anglici Historia Aurea*.

No protestant clergy could receive tithes on this foundation, and they therefore ultimately took their stand on the Act of Henry VIII., who took them from their original possessors, and gave them to whom he would. But the very means by which they were converted into the maintenance of a protestant clergy, implied a power of resumption. They were taken from the papal church, to which they were given for purposes peculiar to that church, and given to another body of men. Nobody could have so good a title to them as the original body, bad as it was; and if they were conveyed to the protestant clergy, by the government, because this appropriation appeared to the government more for the public good—the only justifiable reason—it followed, that, whenever the government saw another plan, in its belief still MORE conducive to the public good, or because the former plan did not produce the proposed end, then, the government could resume them, and apply them according to its wisdom;—besides, that no government can legislate for posterity, except conditionally. Our ancestors could bind no burdens upon us, but with the same proviso of our approval; and thus the clerical title to tithes, in every point of view, resolves itself solely into the will of the government.

We have seen that tithes were the accredited SOUL'S RANSOM; and as CHARITY was declared by Scripture to cover a multitude of sins, they were made to include the principle of charity, as an effectual means of expediting the operation of ransoming, or praying, out of purgatory. This was the reason that they were not merely given to the clergy, but to the poor. One part to the bishop, one to the clergy, one to the support of ecclesiastical buildings, and one to the poor. All this, however, was done away with by the reformed clergy. They robbed the poor of their part, and threw both them and the churches on the country.

The following statement, from the *Essex Independent*, sets the clerical rapacity and want of conscience, in this proceeding, in a striking light.

“The church ought to relinquish the property of the poor. The original tripartite division of tithes is acknowledged, one-third portion of the revenues of the church being the undoubted property of the poor. The entire possessions of the church, in tithe and landed property, amount in value to the sum of 170,450,000*l*.; and the extensive leaseholds lately reverted to the bishopric of London, raise the amount to 180,000,000*l*. One-third of this, i. e. 60,000,000*l*.,

is therefore the sum which the state is most equitably entitled to demand from the church."

Such is the history of tithes ; their operation has been shewn by the ablest writers to have been most deplorable—the source of everlasting rancour between minister and people ; of indolence and riot on one hand, and of poverty on the other—destructive alike to the progress of agriculture and to religious reformation. But it is in Ireland that the system has produced its amplest horrors. There, rapacious priests, for the most part pluralists and absentees, have deputed their claims to voracious tithe proctors, who have dragged this SOUL'S RANSOM from the members of the church which first held it, to give it to the pastors of a church who do not believe it a SOUL'S RANSOM at all, but a very good BODY'S COMFORT,—have dragged it from the poorest cultivator of the poorest and smallest patch of ground, till they have roused the spirit of the whole people to resistance. Hence the hostile meetings of tithe proctors and tithe payers,—hence interference of soldiers,—hence the murders and bloody skirmishes which have made that fine country a waste, and a land of horrors in the ears of all civilized nations. Let any one that reads this recital from the Waterford Chronicle, December 19, 1831, reflect that the country was full of such cases, from one end to the other ; and then wonder, if he can, at all that has occurred :—

" Catherine Carroll is a poor woman, living at Ballytruckle, on the Kil St. Laurence road, in a wretched cabin ; and till this year, she was never called upon to pay incumbent-money. The hand of affliction was upon this poor creature ; her son lay on his death-bed, if bed may be called a wretched wad of straw. A daughter too, was lying ill of a severe cold, with lumps in her throat. The collector called to demand the tax. The wretched woman had not the means of paying it. What was to be done ? The whole house did not contain a sufficient restraint ; but—let me restrain my indignation while I tell it—the poor woman had taken advantage of her children's illness,—of their being confined to bed,—to take off the only shirt and shift they possessed, to wash them ; and unfortunately had them upon a bush at the door, drying, at that moment. The collector saw the prize,—and at one fell swoop, carried off the shirt of the boy !—the shift of the girl !—the trowsers of the poor man !—his stockings !—a waistcoat, belonging to another child !—and an apron belonging to another daughter !—all went, to make nectar of the wine of some pampered ecclesiastic ! The boy died yesterday ; and on the bed of death, although this worse than Turkish act occurred on Friday week, this unhappy child knew not the comfort of a shirt ; and his little corpse is now lying naked, owing to the ruthless system of the church establishment."

At length the people resolved, en masse, to refuse the payment ; and what did our reforming ministers ? Abolish those odious tithes ? No ! As the Irish would not pay them, they decreed that

we should,—giving us the Irish landlords as our sureties for repayment. Thus, not contented with having the Irish people and protestant priesthood in hostile array, they have thrown this fatal apple of discord between the tenants and the landlords, and the consequences cannot be long unseen.

But they are condemned ; and let them go on.

## CHAPTER VI.

### CHURCH PATRONAGE.

WE have incidentally spoken on the subject of this chapter in a previous one : but it is necessary that it should be more fully and particularly noticed. From the system of patronage existing in the British state-church, has flowed the most fatal result. It has filled the church with every species of unworthy character ;—men who look upon it as a prey ; who come to it with coldness and contempt ; who gather its fruits, while other and better men toil for them ; and squander them in modes scandalous, not merely to a church, but to human society. By this means it has been made the heritage of the rich man's children, while the poor and unpatronized man of worth and talent has plodded on in its labours, and despaired. By this means so worldly a character has grown upon its ministers, that they have become blind to the vilest enormities of the system, and now look on simony as a matter of course.

A calculation founded on the population returns of 1821, makes the following the state of church patronage :—

Livings in the gift of the crown . . . . .	1048
"      "      "      bishops . . . . .	1301
"      "      "      deans and chapters . . .	982
"      "      "      universities . . . . .	743
"      "      "      private persons . . . . .	6619

10,693

The first are notoriously made use of by ministers to purchase adherents. By means of these, parliamentary votes are bought, and popular liberty sold. By means of these, corrupt legislators and corrupt subservient persons are dispersed through the country, to aid the views of government. During the long reign of the Tories, these state-beneficed parsons were loud in the pulpits, busy at public meetings and public dinners, busy in all houses where they had access, especially those of the squirearchy, disseminating those doctrines which have brought us to the brink of ruin.

The livings in the gift of the bishops go, of course, amongst their sons and relatives, or to the slaves of government, for whom they

were expressly reserved as the price of the bishop's own preferment. "There is, too, a species of simony," says the author of Ecclesiastical Reform, a beneficed clergyman in 1792, "which prevails in our church, styled PETTICOAT SIMONY; where a clergyman, by marrying the niece or daughter of a bishop, becomes a pluralist of large income, his lady being portioned out of the church. I could point out several persons now living; but it might seem invidious, and shall therefore only instance a notorious one. The Dean of Canterbury married a daughter of Archbishop Potter's, and became possessed of six or seven pieces of preferment, to the amount of above 4000*l.* a-year of the church revenue, by way of marriage portion."

This was the man satirized by Hogarth, in the print of the "Ass laden with Preferment;" but, so far from being abashed by the sarcasm, he publicly declared that Mr. Hogarth was mistaken in making his back bend under the load, for he could bear a great deal more.

The livings in the hands of deans and chapters, and universities, every one knows, are snugly divided amongst their own members. Those of private people, of course, go amongst the sons and relations of the patrons; but if these are wanting, they are publicly sold to the highest bidder.

The traffic in church livings is one of the most notorious things in England. The oath on the institution to a living, is studiously framed in the most solemn and particular manner to prevent this sin of simony; but it matters not,—he who does not boggle at simony, will not boggle at an oath. Public offices are opened in London for the sale and purchase of livings; and printed circulars are industriously introduced amongst the clergy, patrons, and those concerned in such affairs. In one of these, the agent submits to the clergy, a scale of charges for business entrusted to his care; he also takes this opportunity to express his acknowledgments for the very extensive patronage he has had during the last ten years, and to assure the clergy, that every commission confided to his care will continue to be executed with fidelity and promptitude.

"TERMS:—

"INTRODUCTORY FEE, ONE GUINEA.

"To be considered as part payment of the first commission exceeding that amount.

" For the sale of an advowson . . .	{ if the purchase-money does not exceed 4000 <i>l.</i> 2½ per cent.
" For the purchase of an advowson	{ if the purchase-money is above 4000 <i>l.</i> , and under 7000 <i>l.</i> , 2½ per cent.
" For the sale of a next presentation to a living. . . . .	{ if the purchase-money is above 7000 <i>l.</i> , and under 10,000 <i>l.</i> , 2 per cent.

- " For the purchase of a next pre- { if the purchase money is above  
   sentation to a living . . . } 10,000*l.*, 1 $\frac{3}{4}$  per cent.  
 " For the sale of a chapel . . .  
 " For the purchase of a chapel . . .  
 " For procuring a foreign chap- {  
   laincy. . . . . }  
 " For procuring a lectureship . . . }  
 " For procuring a curacy for a } 5 per cent. on the amount of  
   client in orders . . . . . } one year's emolument.  
 " For procuring an exchange of a }  
   living or a curacy . . . . . }  
 " Every description of clerical business transacted ; livings valued,  
   etc. etc.

" FOR EVERY LETTER WRITTEN, 3*s.* 6*d.*"

He then proceeds to inform the clergy that he has always the names of several highly respectable clergymen on his books, and can supply at a day or two's notice, deputies to those who incline to be absent ; that he has always an extensive list of livings for sale, curacies vacant ; livings, chaplaincies, and curacies for exchange. Begs them to remark, that all communications to and from him are strictly confidential, offers his services to spare them all publicity in advertising, etc., and then boasts that he has been already employed by upwards of 5000 clergymen !

Day after day, advertisements appear in the public papers, offering advowsons and next presentations for sale. The law allows the sale of advowsons ; and therefore to purchase an advowson a clergyman thinks no simony. It is the law, he says, and therefore not wrong. No ! not wrong, when your canons declare it simony ? when you swear a solemn oath that you have obtained the living neither by money nor favour ? What the law contemplates is, the sale of advowsons from one layman to another : but it is the clergyman who volunteers himself as a purchaser, and does purchase with a clear knowledge that he outrages the spirit of the law, though he evades the letter ; that he actually commits moral simony, and perjures himself by taking the most solemn oath on the English Statute-book. But law or not law, advowsons which the law permits, but the canon forbids, or next presentations which both forbid, it seems all one to the clergy,—there are plenty of purchasers ; and their agent boasts of having had his 5000 customers for his simoniacal wares.

A clerical writer in the *British (Church) Magazine*, asks, with the utmost simplicity—how can the bishops help men selling advowsons ? It never seems once to occur to him, that if there were no clerical buyers, there would be no sellers. In the same journal (*June, 1832, p. 357*) is the following statement:—"Of the whole number of benefices in England, very nearly 8000 (that is, more

than two-thirds of the whole) are in private patronage. Of the clergy, a very considerable number HAVE PURCHASED the livings which they hold; and of the remainder, most have been brought up to the church, and educated with a view to some particular piece of preferment in the gift of their family and relations. Whether this be right or wrong, it is an effect almost necessarily following from so large a portion of the property of the church being private property; a state of things not to be altered, and which they who wish to abolish pluralities do not talk of altering."

This clerical writer, with the most innocent face imaginable, tells us that simony is common as daylight; that the bulk of the livings in England are not open to the pious and the worthy, but are the heritage of certain men who may be neither—he is so far from seeing any thing amiss, that he goes on to point out the advantage of such a state of things. He declares it cannot be altered; and this is one of his reasons why the church should not be reformed. He does not at all perceive that no church with so scandalous and preposterous a foundation, can stand many years in the midst of a country where the spirit of man is busily at work, to pry into the nature of all things, and where any monopoly, but especially of religious patronage, must assuredly arouse an indignation that will overturn it. Miserably dark must be the moral atmosphere of a church where its members come forward with a mental obtuseness like this, to advocate its abominations as if they were virtues, while the very people gape around them with astonishment, and they perceive it not. But there are no labourers in the demolition of a bad institution like its own friends. They are like insects in a rotten tree; roused by external alarm to activity, they bustle about and scatter the trunk, which holds them, into dust. Such men put a patch of new garments upon the old garment of corruption, and the rent is made worse.

By such means as these the church has been filled with pride and apathy; and it is notorious, that of all christian ministers, those of the establishment are the least interested in their flocks, and cultivate and enjoy the least sympathy with them. Sir Arthur Brooke Faulkner, in his *Tour in Germany*, has the following passage, which coming from a man fresh from the observation of the continental churches, is worthy of attention. "Nowhere else in Europe are clergymen, and no wonder, less respected among the multitude than in the British dominions." He proceeds to account for this, by their apathy, pluralities, exorbitant revenues, maintenance by tithes, and acting as legislators; and adds—"If the statement which has already been alluded to may be credited, the clergy of the United Kingdoms are paid more than the clergy of all the rest of christendom besides, by a million sterling and upwards; the full amount of their annual revenue being 8,852,000*l*. In primitive times, and in the different countries at the present time, which I have visited, the remuneration of their labour is, as we have seen,

in many cases, chiefly voluntary. In these countries it needs no prelacy strutting in lawn sleeves, and 'raising their mitred fronts in courts and parliaments,' to clothe it with respect."

This is borne out by all the world, in contradiction of the assertions of the advocates of our English establishment, who contend that without dignities and large revenues the clergy would sink into contempt. Milton, speaking of the preferments which have been so much vaunted as stimulants to activity and talent in the church, says, "They are but lures or loubells, by which the worldly-minded priest may be tolled, from parish to parish, all the country over." The Scotch clergy have but slender incomes, and what is the testimony of their countrymen, the Edinburgh Reviewers, concerning them?

"In Scotland, there are 950 parish clergymen, whose incomes may average 275*l.* a-year each; and the Scottish clergy are not inferior in point of attainments to any in Europe: no complaints have ever been made of the manner in which they perform their duty; but, on the contrary, their exemplary conduct is the theme of well-merited and constant eulogy."

He who enters on his living as his birth-right, who looks on himself as a gentleman, and his hearers as clowns, what can arouse his zeal? He who has no fear of censure, or removal, whence spring his circumspection and activity? "My father," said the natural son of a nobleman, "said to me—it is time you should choose a profession. You must not be a tradesman, or you cannot sit at my table; you have not shrewdness enough for a lawyer; you would forget or poison your patients, through carelessness, were you a physician;—I must make a parson, or some devil of a thing, of you;—and he made a parson of me;—and I hate the church and every thing belonging to it!" From such ministers what can be expected! Yet such ministers are supplied to the church in legions, by this odious system of private patronage. The ambition of maintaining the character of gentlemen has made clergymen cold, unimpassioned, insipid and useless. It was the same in the latter days of popery. Chaucer sketches us a priest:

That hie on horse willith to ride  
In glitter ande golde of grete arraie,  
Painted and portrid all in pride,  
No common knight maie go so gaie;  
Change of clothing every daie,  
With goldin girdils grete and small,  
As boistrous as is bere at baie,  
All soche falshede mote nedis fall.

We do not want a set of fine gentlemen; we want a race of zealous, well-informed, kind and diligent parish priests. If we must have gentlemen, let us have them of the school of the carpenter's son, whom honest Decker, the tragic poet, declares was

A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit;  
The first true gentleman that ever breathed !

After this pattern, we care not how many gentlemen we have in the church;—gentlemen who are not ashamed, like their master Christ, to be the friends of the poor. Who desire to live for them; to live among them; to learn their wants, to engage their affections, to be their counsellors and guides. Men who can understand and sympathise with the struggling children of poverty, and toil in villages and solitary places, and are therefore understood by them, and are beloved by them, and will follow them and make their precepts the rule of their lives and the precious hope of their deaths. Oh ! what have not our clergy to answer for to God and to their country, that they are not such men; what blessings may they not become by being such ! There are no men whose sphere of influence is more capacious and more enviable. It is the easiest thing in the world to become the very idol of the poor; there needs but to shew them that you feel for them, and they are all ardour and attachment. The parish clergyman has facilities of aiding the poor, that few other men have. At his slightest recommendation, the medical man is ready to afford them his aid; at his suggestion the larder and the wardrobe of the hall open their doors, and the ladies are ready to fly and become the warmest benefactresses of the afflicted.

But what is the actual picture presented to us now, under the operation of this detestable system ? Look where we will, we behold the most gross instances of simony, pluralities, non-residence, profligacy, and penurious remuneration of the working clergy. Gamblers, jockeys, and characterless adventurers are put into livings by the vilest influence, to the horror and loathing of the helpless congregations—and that in populous cities; but in obscure, rural villages, the fruits of the system are ten-fold more atrociously shameful. As an instance, I may mention the following anecdote :

“ I once was passing along the street of a country town in the evening, and my attention was arrested by the most violent ravings and oaths of a man in a shop. I inquired the occasion. ‘ Oh !’ said one of the crowd, who stood seemingly enjoying the spectacle, ‘ Oh ! it is only Parson —— ; he has got drunk and followed a girl into her father’s house, who meeting him at the top of the stairs in pursuit of his affrighted daughter, hurled him to the bottom, and the worthy man of God is now evaporating his wrath in vows of vengeance.’ From these spectators I found it was one of the commonest sights of the town to see this clergyman thus drunk, and thus employed. But why, said I, do not the parishioners get him dismissed ? A smile of astonishment at the simplicity of my query, went through the crowd. ‘ Get him dismissed ! Who shall get him dismissed ? Why, he is the squire’s brother ; he is, in fact, born to the living. There is not a man in the parish who is not a tenant or dependent in some way on the family ; consequently not a



man who dare open his mouth.' They have him, such as he is, and must make their best of him ; and he or his brother will be sure to rear a similar prophet for the next generation."

Here is another:—"I entered a village not five miles off. This I found a lovely retired place, with a particularly handsome church, a noble parsonage, a neglected school, and an absent clergyman. The living was 1800*l.* a year—the incumbent a desperate gambler. 'Why,' again I said, 'don't you get this man dismissed?' I saw the same smile arise at my simplicity. 'La! Sir, why he is his lordship's cousin!' It was a decisive answer—to the principle of private patronage this village also owed the irremediable curse of a gambling parson."

Till this scandalous mode—this mode so insulting to the people of a nation like this, of appointing parish ministers—be abandoned, vain is every hope of internal strength and life to the church. Let every parish choose its own pastor, and a new course will commence. The worthy and the talented will take heart,—piety will meet its natural reward, and work its natural works ; the sot and the hireling incubus will disappear ; the vicar will no more come and pocket his yearly 2000*l.*, and leave his curate to do his yearly labour for 100*l.* ; multitudes of needful reforms will flow into the heart of the church, and a religious regimen and a new life will animate its constitution.

## CHAPTER VII.

### CHURCH REFORM.

So intolerable has the state of the church, described in the preceding chapters, become, that the public are now loud in demanding its reform ; and even some of the clergy themselves, sensible that reform is inevitable, with a wise policy, bend in some degree to the popular opinion.

The ministerial plan for reforming the Irish Church consists principally in reducing the archbishoprics and bishoprics from twenty-two to twelve ; in reducing the incomes of the remaining ones ; in laying on a tax of fifteen per cent. on the general income of the clergy ; in taking off the church cess, or rate, from the people ; and in selling off the lands of the extinguished bishoprics as they fall out of lease. How absurd ! Nothing short of the utter abrogation of Protestant episcopacy, as a state religion, will do. If it were necessary that a religion should be established, as it is called, it ought here to be the Catholic. The opinions of the majority of a nation ought surely to be the guide in such matters. If a nation is to patronize and support one religion in preference to another, it ought surely to be the religion of the nation. The religion of Ireland is Catholic,—the religion of Scotland is Presbyterian.—

Why should Scotland be permitted to have a church of her own, and Ireland be refused one? Why should the majority in the other parts of the empire decide the establishment of their party, and in Ireland an insignificant sect be thrust upon the people as the NATIONAL RELIGION; and be bolstered up with tithes, glebes, and wealth enormous? These are plain questions, and suggest a plain answer.

One circumstance connected with Irish Church reform is characteristic of its real nature and extent, as proposed by the present ministers, and ought to have opened the eyes of all men. The bishopric of Derry, the most enormously endowed in Ireland, was vacant at the very moment of the organization of this plan of reform. If a number of bishoprics were to be reduced, why should not this have been one? Or if it were not thought desirable to extinguish it, why should not the incumbent of one of those sees who were to be withdrawn, be translated to this, and thus one at least have been instantly removed? The surprise which the appointment of a bishop to this see, under these circumstances, created, was at once dissipated, and gave place, in the public mind, to a higher surprise, and feeling of indignation, by the discovery that the bishop thus installed, was Dr. Poynton, the brother-in-law of Earl Grey! This was an assurance sufficiently intelligible. Will a man set himself heartily to cut down a tree in whose topmost branches he has placed his brother? Will a man essay to sink a vessel in which he has embarked his own family? Will a general proceed cordially to blow up a fortress in which his near relative is commandant?—Then, will Earl Grey set himself heartily to work, to reform efficiently the Irish church?

The abolition of this bishopric would have been a thing of the highest importance. Its revenue, according to the present return, is 13,000*l.*; and it is proposed to reduce it to 8,000*l.* But what is the estimate of Mr. Wakefield of the value of this see?—a most competent authority. He calculates that the whole of its property, over and above the tenth part of the gross produce of the land, cannot be much short of 3,000,000*l.*; and that the bishop's land, at a fair rate of rent, would produce an income of 130,000*l.* a year. This, then, is the berth into which Earl Grey, in the face of a reformed parliament—of his own professions of real reform—of suffering England, and starving Ireland, has comfortably put his brother-in-law, and proposes to satisfy the country by the abatement of 5,000*l.* a year out of this immense property. By the extinction of this bishopric alone, a saving to the country of 3,000,000*l.* would have been made at once!—for the question in this case is not what the bishop actually derives from the land, but what it is worth to the nation.

The Irish church reform bill is, however, just such a scheme as might have been expected from Earl Grey. What, indeed, could be looked for? Lord Grey, with two brothers bishops, of his own appointment; the Lord Chancellor, with a vast weight of church

patronage; Mr. Stanley, of a family, in whose possession is one living alone worth 8,000*l.* a year; and most of the other ministers mixed up, more or less, with aristocratic church-and-state influence. Accordingly, the Irish Church Reform is one of the most melancholy farces with which a set of state pretenders ever insulted a great people. The only substantially good thing in it is the abolition of the church cess; and this is too insignificant in itself, either to satisfy the Irish people, or to relieve the church from the disgrace and odium under which it lies.

The church will not be placed in its own real and useful position, until it is really and entirely divorced from the state. This unnatural union, the device of artful politicians, is an injustice to the public, and an indignity to the church itself. The natural effect upon a church in becoming a state religion is, that its freedom is instantly extinguished; every principle of progression and improvement is annihilated; and the generous spirit which would lead it to expand, and spread itself abroad on the kindred spirits of men, is frozen by the cold breath of worldly policy. Like metal moulten in the furnace, it flows into the state as into a mould, receives its shape and stamp, and sets for ever. It may be dashed to pieces by the application of external force; but, last as long as it may, it will never be moved, remodelled, or purified, from within. It becomes stationary for ever. However all around may be quickened with the moving spirit of knowledge, and excited to activity and fruitfulness, it stands silent and barren.—It is like a tree covered with the knots and burs of antiquated absurdities; its head a chaos of rotten boughs amid the green vigour of the forest; and while it is insensibly falling to decay, it bears itself with a sturdy and sullen pride, and wears a ludicrous air of superiority in the very moment of its fall. That such is the situation of the Establishment, who can deny?—Who that calls to mind its doctrine of absolution of sins; its Athanasian creed,—a thing so monstrous as to horrify and make ashamed the best minds of its own sons; and moreover, its Thirty-nine Articles, that precious medley of follies and contradictions,—a medley, however, which every one, owing to the inflexible nature of the church, is obliged to swallow before he can be ordained a minister, and which Paley, after acknowledging that it was a Gordian knot, endeavoured to cut asunder, by declaring these articles, articles of peace; as if it would enable men to escape the guilt of falsehood, by treating bitter and contradictory professions of faith as physis, and swallowing them as a necessity? These articles lie at the door of the church as a threshold of lying; and, if perjury does not depend on a form of words, but on the inward denial of a solemn truth,—of perjury, to every one of its ministers who is not wild enough to believe impossibilities: and in one university, stand in the way of every student. The great Jeremy Bentham, one of the noblest, as well as most sagacious minds which ever blessed earth by its presence, has left on record what it cost him to sub-

scribe them ; and numberless are the conscientious spirits which have turned away from them in disgust. Yet there they stand at the church-door, in all their glorious contrariety, and would for ever stand, while the church was a member of the state.

When a church stands on its own simple basis, it may renovate its constitution ; it may explode worn-out creeds ; abandon dogmas or rites that have become hideous in the increased light of universal knowledge, and preserve itself in keeping with the spirit of the age, and in consequent capacity for usefulness ; but, make it a portion of the state, and it immediately becomes a species of high treason to attempt the least change in it. Make its ministers illustrious with dignities, and fat with good livings, and they will for ever cry, " Great is Diana of the Ephesians !" The church will be the best of churches—immaculate and divine ; and they will growl on any one who even dares to look curiously at it, as a jealous dog growls over his bone. Make it the road to political power and honour, and you make its highest ministers the most obsequious slaves of state ; the most relentless enemies of freedom and mercy.

What Selden says, is most true—" It hath ever been the game of the church, when the king would let the church have no power, to cry down the king, and cry up the church ; but when the church can make use of the king's power, then to bring all under the king's prerogative." In every case, the state clergy are the enemies of the people. They may occasionally spurn at the monarch, when he ceases to be a prelatical jackal—but at all times they are averse to the liberty of the subject. Their hostility to the Reform Bill will not readily be forgotten ; and has, no doubt, hastened by many years the downfall of their order.

But, the church, ceasing to be a state church, should restore its property to the nation, whence it was drawn. That, in strict justice, all national property should revert to the nation, when the object for which it was bestowed ceases, there can be no question ; in strict justice to the other Christian communities of this country, this ought clearly to be the case,—since, admitting the rights of conscience, the nation ought not to enrich one body of Christians at the expense of the rest. That parliament has a right to recal the loan of church property is clear as daylight. The present priesthood form a standing proof and precedent of it, since it was taken from the Catholics and given to them.

In resuming the national property, respecting at the same time all private endowments made since the Reformation, which ought to be held as sacred as the private endowments of the Dissenters, every lover of his country, and its monuments of history and art, would desire to see a sufficient fund appropriated to maintain in repair our noble cathedrals—specimens of the architectural genius of our ancestors ; and our parish churches—objects of picturesque beauty. This fund need not be large, since a handsome sum would arise from letting them as places of worship ; giving always, as a matter of

courtesy, the original preference to their present occupiers; and to pass out of their hands only in case of neglect, desertion, or abuse; the existence of such sufficient causes to be determined in a manner prescribed by parliament. The parsonages and glebes might also be valued at a moderate price; the option of purchase given to the episcopalians; and the payment to be made by such instalments as would render it as little burdensome as possible; or, let the nation act munificently, as becomes a great nation, and give them freely the parsonages and glebes; always and in every case demanding the surrender of private patronage, and investing the election of the minister in the people.

In the disposal of the bulk of the church property, regard should be had to the original intentions of the donors; and this intention was, according to the best of their knowledge, and the knowledge and opinions of the age,—the Christian enlightenment and instruction of the people. No appropriation of this wealth appears, therefore, so conducive to this object as that of establishing with it a national system of education. To bring up the children of the state in the way they should go, ought to be, and will be, one of the most serious aims of a Christian community. It is precisely that measure which is, of all others, wanted in our populous country, to prevent that growth of crime, which it is at present the melancholy task of the executive to punish, without a hope of subduing. Much is done by the generous exertions of individuals; but individual labours cannot reach the extent of the evil; nor ought the burden, if they could, to rest on them. It is the especial business of the state; the state ought to see it effected; and here are ample means! It would, at the same time, be necessary to guard these means from the lamentable spirit of jobbing which infects almost all our public measures; and from every partial, sectarian, or personal influence in their distribution, so that the children of all parties should reap an equal benefit. What a glorious reform would this be—what an animating subject of reflection to every patriotic mind—that the wealth which now disappoints and scandalizes the nation, should be turned into a source of perpetual blessings: instead of feeding the riotous, the absentee, the reckless pluralist, or heavy unfaithful indolence, it should be pouring knowledge and moral life through the hearts of all the children of the poor in this mighty kingdom!

“A government cannot patronize one particular religion without punishing others. A state has no wealth but the people’s wealth. If it pay some, it impoverishes others.” To tell us that we may all enjoy our own opinions, and celebrate our own worship in perfect freedom, and yet to compel us to support another mode of religion, and another set of opinions, in our eyes erroneous and unchristian, is at once an oppression and a bitter mockery. It is not so much the sum of actual money that we pay, which constitutes the grievance,—that might be borne; but the gravamen lies here,—that by supporting an establishment, we support what, in the ab-

stract, both religiously and morally, we believe ought not to exist. We believe it is the duty of a government, and especially of a Christian government, which acknowledge the sacred rites of conscience, to protect every modification of the Christian religion ; but not to support one in preference to, and at the expense of, the rest. This is not to patronize religion, but a party. That an establishment, unjust and impolitic in itself, never can, and never has, promoted true religion, is shewn abundantly by this volume ; it is testified equally by the apathy of the established church, and the activity of the dissenters. Is it not a source of continual complaints and bitterness amongst clerical writers, that the dissenters are for ever intruding themselves into their parishes ; and with what they are pleased to term their fiery fanaticism, continually turn the heads of their parishioners, and seduce them to conventicles ? Now whether this zeal be healthful or not, whether it be pure or alloyed, refined or coarse, rational or fanatic, it matters not to our present question,—it is zeal,—and the vital question is, Whence does it arise ? How is it maintained ? Not, certainly, from a state establishment !—not by charters and endowments. It springs from the soul of the people, and asks no breath of life but their approbation.

Here, then, is an acknowledged principle of religious propagation, more efficacious than all the boasted influence of canonicals and mitres ; of cathedral piles and sounding orchestras ; of all the political machinery of tithes, and glebes, and church-rates, and forced payments, called by the sarcastic name of gifts and offerings, as if the imposition were not enough, but we must suffer the mockery of being placed in the light of free donors and bowing offerers of gifts at a shrine that we inwardly abhor. Here is a confessed power to keep alive the popular zeal for religion ;—if that zeal wants better guidance, it becomes every good man to lend his hand to its due direction,—but the principle itself is indisputably manifested, and sets the seal for ever to the non-necessity, and therefore to the political oppression, of a state religion.

Nothing could justify a state religious establishment, but the total and proven impossibility of keeping alive Christianity without it ; but here it is seen that religious zeal rather takes any other form than that stamped upon it by legal enactments. Like the acanthus pressed under the tile, it rises up with unquenchable vitality all around, and not only buries the dead tile of policy under its vigorous vegetation, but gives origin to new orders of Christian architecture. While the zeal of the established clerical order languishes under the weight of good things which its friends have cast upon it ; while bishoprics, and deaneries, and prebends cannot stimulate it to the vital point of proselytism ; while tithes, and glebes, and fines, and parochial fees cannot enliven it, the free breath of popular societies can blow it into a flame that spreads far and wide, and even scorches the canonical skirts of the state clergy. Who, after this, shall dare to repeat the stale sophism, that Christianity needs the arm of

human legislation to support her,—that she must be perched on cathedral pinnacles to be fairly seen; that she must be wrapped in alb or surplice, and crowned with shovel-hat or mitre to be revered, and seated on the episcopal throne to be adored? Who shall dare to turn his eye on the United States of America, where there is no state religion, yet where Christianity flourishes not less than amongst us, and then attempt to palm upon us the canting and selfish falsehood, that religion is bound up in a bundle of life with an Act of Parliament?

By compelling us to support an established religion, we are compelled to support and propagate all its errors, its injustice, and its absurdities, however great, and numerous, and pernicious they may be. Every sect in England at present, in contributing to the establishment, contributes to that which it abhors. The denouncer of episcopacy is made to maintain a whole hierarchy of bishops; the Catholic, what he declares to be pestilent heresies of the most damnable sort; the Calvinist maintains Arminianism; the Arminian Calvinism; for, in the church are combined “A Calvinistic creed, and an Arminian clergy.” The Friend, who believes all hierarchies anti-christian, who holds that all ministers should speak from the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit, and abominates hireling ministers, written sermons, a cut-and-dried liturgy, and half the doctrines of the church to boot, is forced, by dstraint of his goods, to feed and uphold all these enormities; every man is made to maintain the doctrine of priestly absolution, for the church maintains it; and every man is made most heartily to damn himself, for the Athanasian Creed, which is one of the creeds of the church, does declare every man to be damned who doubts it.

Such a preposterous abuse of power never can be much longer tolerated in this country. The church-rates must be abolished; indeed the people have shewn, that if the government will not abolish them, they will do it for themselves; and with them, tithes must cease also:—and hence, as we have said, the ministers have signified their intention to abolish both.

Every institution professing itself to be a state establishment of Christianity, is a gross insult and standing LIBEL upon Christianity; for it goes upon this presumption, that it is a religion not capable of its own inherent power to propagate, maintain, and perpetuate itself. It is founded upon the avowed principle that the Christian religion requires the arm of royalty, the protection of legislative enactments, the stimulus of compulsory provision, to prolong its existence; that, unless a government engrafts upon a whole people the form of this religion, holds in its pay a host of hireling ministers, and recommends it by the sanction and force of law, it has not attractions sufficient of its own, to draw to it voluntary votaries. Never was religion more scandalously libelled; never was the understanding of a whole nation more insulted, than by this invention and doctrine! Yet that such is the real principle of state religions, their advocates

make no secret of confessing. Every day we are told by reverend and right reverend polemics and pamphleteers, and by the Tory literary and newspaper press, that, "if we had no established religion, we should soon have no religion at all."

What! is this said of that religion for which Christ lived and died?—that religion, which a prophetic metaphor of most singular truth and beauty, represented as "a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which grew and filled the whole earth?" that religion of which its Divine founder, so far from commanding or recommending any national establishment, declared that it was a kingdom not of this world; of which he promised, that "where two or three were met together in his name, there he would be, in the midst of them?" Two or three—not whole nations, whole hierarchies merely, but two or three—not of any particular name, description, or peculiarity of doctrine; not merely those sanctioned by kings and priests, by bishops or presbyters; not great and learned only; but two or three, of any class, any name, any nation, so that they were but men, and so that they were met together in his name. Can it be this religion which we are told shall dwindle and expire, except it be chartered and rivetted on a state by its government? This religion, to whose first ministers Christ said, "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses; neither scrip for your journey; neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet two staves;" but added, "Go ye into all nations, and preach the gospel;" assuring them that he would "be with them always, until the end of the world?" Can it be of this religion that its professed believers, after eighteen centuries of its triumphs, can thus speak—thus fling back in the face of their Redeemer, in contempt and scorn, his own eternal words? Thus insult the reason of his whole people, in every church and nation, in defiance of history overflowing with proofs that his gospel is an immortal and an invincible principle, asking of human governments none of their purblind enactments, none of their artificial establishments, but only room and freedom to spread and bring every spirit beneath its influence?

What is the testimony of all history? Did this religion require, or did it enjoy in its infancy, the protection of power, and the smiles of earthly governments? Every body knows that it arose and grew in spite of them. It had to contend singly with the prejudices and old idolatries of the whole world. The Jews slew its founder—their own brother—and scattered with bitter persecutions his followers: the Romans, the universal masters of the known earth, pursued them with desolating fury, and heaped every exterminating terror on them; but in the very teeth of all this hatred, they spread and increased till theirs became the predominant religion, and the Roman emperor received it as his own. This was the infancy of Christianity. Instead of tithes and national favour, the aliment on which it grew was poverty, persecution, and slaughter; the hatred and the envy of the wise and strong. This was its



infancy ;—but perhaps it will be said that it was an infancy under the immediate watch and guardianship of its divine founder ; under the first out-pourings of his omnipotent spirit. What then ? Has this religion grown old ? Can it become decrepid, wasted, and weary ? Has that gushing forth of the divine spirit entirely ceased ? Has Christ indeed spoken a lie ? Has he failed to be with his disciples alway, to the end of the world ? Has he failed to be in the midst of the two or three ? Let the events of these latter days speak for themselves. For a thousand years this celestial faith suffered eclipse ; for a thousand years, clasped in the iron arms of monarchy ; overwhelmed with delusive flatteries, bound by law upon law, and tradition upon tradition, it has been “ cribbed, cabined, and confined.” Lies have been propagated in its name ; swarms of vile creatures have made it an inexhaustible prey, and have heaped upon its head abuses scandalous and loathsome. It has had to contend with the desolations of barbarism, the selfish pretences of kings and priests, and the stupified spirits of a trodden populace ; but it has lived through all. It has suffered that which would have been tenfold death to aught less than divine ; and has even given life and beneficent power to institutions in themselves deadly. Like the fabled lamp of the Rosicrucians, its light has lain buried in the ruins of cities and temples, and has flashed through the chinks of tombs ; till, in these latter times, it has burst on the startled eyes of the explorers, into the waste places of the earth, with a blaze like that of the sun.

It was triumphant in its early career ; has it been less so in its latest ? Let the champions of the Reformation ; let America ; let our missionary societies ; let the dissenters in general, and the Methodists in particular, reply. Was it by the aid of states that the doctrines of the reformers spread ? Let Huss and Jerome of Prague, let Oldcastle, let Cranmer, Latimer, and a thousand other martyrs, speak to this. But what establishment has given Christianity such splendid prevalence in America ? Has this been the effect of mitres and lawn sleeves, of wealthy lordships and fat livings presented by government or private patrons in scorn of the popular choice ? No ! religion has in the United States all that true Christianity asks,—freedom to operate, and human hearts to operate upon. This is a great experiment on the intrinsic and unabated vitality of this blessed faith, which is worth a world of arguments,—which includes all arguments within itself ; an experiment which will put to silence every cavilling of the interested,—for it has succeeded even to the amplitude of the apostolic age. Fain would the spiritual despots escape from the inevitable conclusions to be drawn from this great example,—but they cannot do it. They tell us that British America is yet in its infancy ; and they add, in the bitterness of an unhallowed hope, it may yet stumble in its career. What then ? Let America fall from its high estate to morrow ; let it grow drunk with prosperity, and rend itself

to pieces in the frenzy of ambitious discord; let Christianity be fettered to the car of state, as in Europe:—what then? The great trial is made and decided! Christianity has been cast upon the bosom of a multitudinous people,—a people compounded of many a mingled origin; daily contaminated by swarming arrivals of the most debased outpourings of European population; and, even in such a soil, it has proved that so long as a legislature refrains totally from interference with it, it will flourish with all the energy of its youth. “Look,” says an American writer quoted by Mr. Marshall in his work on Establishments, “at the ten thousand clergymen, the free choice of the people, living in the hearts, and supported by the free-will offerings of their respective flocks, and exerting a moral influence, and imparting a moral benefit, far more extensive and lasting than the English priesthood, with all its secular power, and patronage, and wealth.” But it is not merely to the settled population of the United States that Christianity thus shews itself in its native strength; it can afford to go forth, by its domestic missions, to every obscure haunt of the back-woodsmen; nay, it can afford, in the power of voluntary contribution, to have its foreign missions. The “Christian Advocate,” for November 1830, published at Philadelphia, says, “There are forty-seven missionary stations under the direction of the Board. One is at Bombay, five in Ceylon, one at Malta, one at Bayroot, six at the Sandwich Islands, and thirty-three among the North American Indians. About 11,000 converted heathens have been received into the mission churches; a large portion of them within the last year, and great numbers are brought under religious restraint, giving more or less an evidence of piety. At least 50,000 learners are enrolled in the mission schools; and about 600 teachers, most of them natives, who have themselves been taught by missionary influence, are employed in them. The missionaries and the Board have made use of the press for the dissemination of knowledge in eleven languages,—namely, Mahratta, Tamul, Armeno-Turkish, Arabic, Greek, Italian, Cherokee, Choctaw, Seneca, Abernakee, and Hawaiian.”

And all this is done by a nation in that stage of its career in which all other people have been cruel barbarians; a nation that takes not a penny from the state to maintain its preachers; a nation that our state-fed priests have dared to brand as irreligious and even atheistical, while they have themselves been rioting in idleness on those prodigious funds sacrificed by England to a state creed!

## CHAPTER VIII.

## A CHAPTER OF WORTHIES.

BUT while we condemn all political religions *in toto*, let us beware of condemning innocent men. I have declared in the very outset of my volume, that excellent men are involved in the intricacies of the worst systems. Let us not spare the systems for the men, for such men are necessarily few, and the welfare of all society is concerned in the destruction of religious impositions,—but let us spare the men for their own sakes. In every system, I say, such men are to be found,—men who are not good through the system, but in spite of it;—men who, in their simplicity of heart, think little of the scheme with which they are bound up, so entirely are their souls occupied with the one great thought, to be and do good; or if they think at all of the system, they are so blinded by the power of education as not to perceive its defects; or if they do perceive them, feel too much their own individual weakness to think of contending against a mighty national plan, but hope rather to bring good out of evil.

It will be a delightful employment to forget for a moment the horrors and indignities of the theme we have thus far pursued, by fixing our attention on those good men, the salt of the earth, the true beneficent children of that beneficent Christ, who suffered all evil, and wrought all good.

We need only take one specimen—such was Fenelon! Where could there exist under any system a more beautiful, consummate specimen of Christian perfection than in this man? I do not mean to say that he was free from human errors or weakness; but that that perfection of Christian benevolence, that humility and piety of heart which Christianity can alone inspire, dwelt eminently in him. He had truly learned, what Coleridge has so beautifully taught, that love is the soul of the religion of Christ:

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell

To thee, thou wedding-guest;

He prayeth well, who loveth well

Both man, and bird, and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best

All things both great and small;

For the dear God who loveth us,

He made and loveth all.

Such a man was our own Bernard Gilpin, called, for his zeal and virtue, the Apostle of the North. How the heart glows and expands at the contemplation of such noble beings. Bernard Gilpin, like Fenelon, was educated a papist, but becoming, from the growing influence of protestantism, uneasy with its dogmas, he was advised by his uncle Tonsal, bishop of Durham, to go abroad for a year or two to converse with the most eminent professors of both faiths.

But here a difficulty presented itself—the expense. The bishop told him his living would in part supply that ; but Gilpin's conscience could not tolerate the idea of what is so easily tolerated by thousands of our present clergy ; his notions of the pastoral care were so strict, that he thought no excuse could justify non-residence for so considerable a time as he intended to be abroad ; he therefore resigned his living to a suitable person, and set out. He spent three years in Holland, Germany, and Florence ; and returned during the period of the Marian persecution. His uncle presented him with the rectory of Easington, and made him archdeacon of Durham ; but his conscience would not long let him hold them : he resigned them, and accepted the rectory of Houghton—a pastoral charge, more consonant to his notions of ministerial duty. This rectory was worth about 400*l.* per annum—a large sum for that day ; but it was proportionably laborious, being so extensive as to contain no less than fourteen villages, overcast with the darkness of popish ignorance and superstition. He preached and laboured with the zeal and affection of a primitive apostle ; the people flocked about him with enthusiasm, and received from him at once temporal and spiritual blessings ; and his enemies were as much exasperated. He was pointed out as a proper victim to that monster of all priestly butchery, the “ Bloody Bonner,” and was speedily apprehended by the emissaries of that detestable wretch. His friends had not failed in time to warn him of his danger ; but he refused to fly. He had even a garment made, in which he might go decently to the stake, and used daily to put it on till he was taken into custody. Fortunately, the queen died before he reached London ; and he returned to his parish amid the joyful acclamations of his delighted people. Here he continued to live and labour in all good works : he established schools, obtaining able masters from Oxford ; and when he met a boy upon the road, he would make a trial of his capacity by a few questions ; and if he found him to his mind, he sent him to school, and if he there kept up his first promise, afterwards to the university. Many of his scholars became ornaments to the church and nation,—amongst them Henry Ayrey, provost of Queen's College ; George Carleton, bishop of Chichester ; and Hugh Broughton.

His hospitable manner of living was the admiration of the whole country ; and strangers and travellers met with a cheerful reception. Even their beasts had so much care taken of them, that it was humorously said, if a horse was turned loose in any part of the country, it would immediately make its way to the rectory of Houghton. Every Sunday, from Michaelmas to Easter, was a sort of public day with him. During this season he expected to see all his parishioners and their families, whom he seated, according to their ranks, at three tables ; and when absent from home, the same establishment was kept up. When Lord Burleigh, then Lord Treasurer, was sent on public affairs into Scotland, he unexpectedly paid

a visit to Mr. Gilpin; but the economy of his house was not easily disconcerted; and he entertained the statesman and his retinue in such a manner as made him acknowledge he could hardly have expected more at Lambeth. Lord Burleigh made great offers of advancement to him, which he respectfully but firmly declined, feeling persuaded he was in a far more useful sphere than in a bishopric. On looking back from an eminence, after he left Houghton, Burleigh could not help exclaiming, "There is the enjoyment of life indeed! Who can blame that man for not accepting a bishopric? What doth he want to make him greater, happier, or more useful to mankind?"

"Mr. Gilpin's labours," says his worthy descendant and biographer, the late Rev. William Gilpin, "extended beyond his own parish. He every year visited divers neglected parishes in Northumberland, Yorkshire, Cheshire, Westmorland, and Cumberland; and that his own flock might not suffer, he was at the expense of a constant assistant. In all his journeys, he did not fail to visit the gaols and places of confinement; and by his labours and affectionate manner of behaviour, he is said to have reformed many abandoned persons, in those abodes of human misery. He had set places and times of preaching, in the different parts of the country, which were as regularly attended as the assize times of a circuit. If he came to a place in which there was a church, he made use of it; if not, of barns, or any other large buildings, where great crowds were sure to flock,—some, probably, for his bounty,—but he had a sort of enthusiastic warmth in his addresses, which roused many to a sense of religion who had never thought of any thing serious before. The dangers and fatigues attending this employment, were, in his estimation, abundantly compensated by the advantages accruing from them to his uninstructed fellow-creatures. He did not spare the rich. Barnes, bishop of Durham, who had succeeded his uncle Tonstal, was early prejudiced against him by his enemies. The bishop therefore resolved to go and hear him preach; and Gilpin prepared him such a sermon as terrified all his friends—they considered it all over with him, and blamed him severely for giving the bishop such a handle against him. He only replied, that 'if the discourse should do the good he intended, he was regardless of its consequences to himself.' He had laid down the duties of a Christian bishop in the freest and most energetic terms. He immediately called on the prelate, who said, 'Sir, I intend to wait on you home myself.' When they arrived at the rectory, and entered the house, the bishop turned suddenly round, and grasping him eagerly by the hand, said, 'Father Gilpin, I know you are fitter to be bishop of Durham, than I am to be parson of this church of yours. I ask forgiveness of past injuries. Forgive me, father; I know you have enemies; but while I live to be bishop of Durham, none of them shall cause you any further trouble.'" Noble Gilpin! noble bishop! such an incident is worth a thousand pages of the ordinary

annals of priests and prelates. Here then lived and died this good old man. He is said, by unwearied application, to have amassed a vast stock of knowledge; to have been ignorant of no part of learning in esteem at that time; to have been more than usually skilled in the classic languages, history, and poetry, in which he excelled: but every thing he made subservient to the more ennobling and advantaging of his Christian ministry.

He bore his great commission in his look,  
 But sweetly tempered awe, and softened all he spoke.  
 He preached the joys of heaven, and pains of hell,  
 And warned the sinner with becoming zeal;  
 But on eternal mercy loved to dwell.  
 He taught the gospel rather than the law,  
 And forced himself to drive, but loved to draw.  
 Now through the land his cure of souls he stretched,  
 And like a primitive apostle preached;  
 Still cheerful, ever constant to his call;  
 By many followed, and admired by all.  
 Such was the saint, who shone with every grace,  
 Reflecting, Moses-like, his Maker's face.  
 God saw his lively image was expressed,  
 And his own work, as in creation, blessed.

*Chaucer's Good Parson.*

For his exemplary piety, for his laborious virtue, and unbounded benevolence, he deserves to have his name transmitted to all posterity with the reverence felt, and the title conferred on him by his cotemporaries—the Apostle of the North.

Such men, too, were those who watched over the infant fortunes of the reformation in England. We need not say more of them, for they sealed their testimonies in their blood. We have already seen, that although Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, Grindal, Taylor of Haddleigh, and their cotemporaries, had many of the errors of their papal education clinging about them, they were honestly resolved, ready from their souls to live and die for what they deemed the truth, and that if kingly power had not prevented it, they would have brought the English church far nearer the Christian standard. Such afterwards were Archbishops Abbot and Usher. Such were there, too, amongst the parish clergy, and pre-eminently George Herbert.

This good man was brother of the celebrated Lord Herbert of Cherbury, who, himself a disbeliever, has left the highest testimony to the Christian worth of George. In his youth, George Herbert was, like his brother, much of a courtier, and a most ingenious flatterer. He was born in 1593, at Montgomery Castle. In 1619 he was appointed University orator at Cambridge; but being a great proficient in music, to which he was enthusiastically attached; of fascinating person and manners; fond of gaiety of dress and life; and of great ingenuity of wit, and mental attainments; his society

was courted by the great and fashionable, and not less by the learned. Lord Bacon is said to have consulted him on his writings before they went to press, and dedicated to him his translation of some of the Psalms, as the best judge of sacred poetry. The king was fond of his conversation ; Bishop Andrews was a great admirer of him ; and Sir Henry Wotton, Dr. Donne, and other celebrated men of his time, were amongst his associates. The court appeared, therefore, the fit element for such a character ; and there he, in fact, was chiefly to be found. But fortunately for himself and for others, his prospects there were blasted by the death of his chief patrons, the Duke of Richmond and the Marquis of Hamilton, and finally by that of James himself. These losses gave his mind such a shock and awakening, that he retired into the country, and lived some time in the strictest privacy, reviewing with regret his past life, and resolving thenceforth to dedicate himself to the service of religion. " I will," he said, " consecrate all my learning, and all my abilities, to advance the glory of that God who gave them ; knowing that I can never do too much for Him that has done so much for me as to make me a Christian. And I will labour to be like my Saviour, by making humility lovely in the eyes of all men ; and by following the merciful and meek example of my dear Jesus." Such was his resolution ; and few men have more entirely fulfilled it, in every respect. His life from this time became a pattern to all, and especially to his brethren in the church.

One of his first acts was to rebuild the parish church of Leighton Bromswold, in the diocese of Lincoln, at risk of great expense to himself ; but he principally passed his short, but memorable life, on his living at Bemerton, in Wilts. Here he lived as Gilpin had lived in the north, making himself the blessing of his flock. Here he wrote his " Priest to the Temple, or Country Parson ;" an admirable manual for a parochial pastor, and one which, would our clergy model themselves upon, would soon produce, not merely a reform of the church, but of the whole country.

To these names of light in the book of good memorial we might add that of Fletcher of Madeley, whose whole life was like theirs, and who refused a living for two rare reasons—the income was too large, and the duty too small ! We might add that of William Mompesson, whose patriotic devotion, when the plague raged in his village of Eyam, is well known. We might add, also, the names of many missionaries, who have done good far and wide.

These men, I say, are the salt of the earth ; they shew what Christianity will effect, when it is faithfully received, and fittingly preached. It would be delightful to dwell longer upon them. These are the men that I would fain see scattered through every parish of this country—I care not under what distinctive name ; for, while I would gladly behold every state religion destroyed, I should rejoice to see Christianity prospering in every shape to which men can

attach themselves with heart and understanding. But how are such men to become general in the pulpits of what is called the Church of England? Again we must declare, that it can be by no other means than a total separation of that church from that state—a total abolition of the system of patronage! I have already shewn to what a woful condition these things have reduced it; I have shewn that while these things continue, good men must necessarily be excluded, and the idle, the dissipated, and the incompetent, fill it. Hereditary succession, and the long purse, will still cast out simple piety. The incumbents of our 10,560 parishes, chosen, in the first place, from the luxurious and extravagant classes of society, must next be educated at those Universities, which Milton, in his day, and Wesley, Whitfield, Dell, Simpson, in more recent times, and Beverly at this moment, have declared, from intimate knowledge, to be the veriest sinks of wickedness, and the mere venders of monkish and inefficient education.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### CONCLUSION.

THUS we have traversed the field of the world. We have waded through a mass of priestly enormities. We have seen nations sitting in the regions of darkness, because their priests shut up knowledge in the dark lanterns of their selfishness. We have seen slavery and ignorance blasting, under the guidance of priestly hands, millions upon millions of our race, and making melancholy the fairest portions of the earth. We have listened to sighs and the dropping of tears, to the voice of despair and the agonies of torture and death; we have entered dungeons, and found captives wasted to skeletons with the years of their solitary endurance; we have listened to their faint whispers, and have found that they uttered the cruelties of priests. We have stumbled upon midnight tribunals, and seen men stretched on racks; torn piecemeal with fiery pincers; or plunged into endless darkness by the lancing of their eyes; and have asked whose actions these were?—and answered—"The priests!" We have visited philosophers, and found them carefully concealing their discoveries, which would suddenly have filled the earth with light, and power, and love,—because they knew the priests would turn on them in their greedy malice, and doom them to fire or gibbet. We have walked among women of many countries, and have found thousands lost to shame, rolling wanton eyes, uttering hideous



words. We have turned from them with loathing, but have heard them cry after us, as we went—"Our hope is in the priests,—they are our lovers, and defenders from eternal fire." We have entered, for shelter from this horror, the abodes of domestic love, and have stood petrified to find even there all desecrated—purity destroyed—faith overthrown—happiness annihilated;—and it was the work of priests! Finally, we have seen kings, otherwise merciful, instigated by the devilish logic of priestcraft, become the butchers of their people; queens, otherwise glorious, become tyrants and executioners; and people, who would otherwise have lived in blessed harmony, warring on each other with inextinguishable malice and boundless blood-thirstiness; and behold! it was priestcraft, that, winding amongst them like a poisonous serpent, maddened them with its breath, and exulted, with fiendish eyes, over their horrible carnage. All this we have beheld, and what is the mighty lesson it has taught? It is this—that if the people hope to enjoy happiness, mutual love, and general prosperity, they must carefully snatch from the hands of their spiritual teachers all political power, and confine them solely to their legitimate task of Christian instruction. Let it always be borne in mind, that, from the beginning of the world to this time, there never was a single conspiracy of SCHOOLMASTERS against the liberties and the mind of man; but, in every age, the priests, the SPIRITUAL SCHOOLMASTERS, have been the most subtle, the most persevering, the most cruel enemies and oppressors of their species. The moral lesson is stamped on the destinies of every nation,—the inference is plain enough to the dullest capacity. Your preachers, while they are preachers alone, are harmless as your schoolmasters; they have no motive to injure your peace; but let them once taste power, or the fatal charm of too much wealth, and the consequent fascinations of worldly greatness, and, like the tiger who has once tasted blood, they are henceforth your cruellest devourers and oppressors.

And let one great truth be marked.—The prevalent character of a public body stamps itself in the public mind as faithfully as a man's face in a mirror. There may be exceptions to a body, and they may be considerable: but when that body becomes proverbial; when it is, as a whole, the object of the jokes, the sarcasms, and the contempts of the people, that body is not partially, but almost wholly corrupt. Now such is the character of the church of England clergy, in the mind of the British people. We may be told it is the vulgar opinion, and that the vulgar are wrong. In judgments of this kind, the vulgar, as they are called, are right. They always were so: but this, too, will be denied. A body in its corruption never did, and never will admit it: its only feeling will be anger, not repentance. When the Romish church was utterly corrupted; when its priests and monks were the scandal and the scorn of all men, did the church admit it? did it reform them?—When Luther's artillery was thundering against it, and shaking it

to its foundations, did it admit the justice of his attack? No! it only turned in rage, and would have devoured him, as it devoured all other reformers. When he had knocked down many of its pillars, blown up many of its bastions, laid bare to public scorn and indignation its secret fooleries and horrors, it relaxed not an atom of its pretensions; it abated not a jot of its pride; it stayed not its bloody arm; shunned not to proclaim itself still holy, invulnerable, and supreme. While Dante and Boccaccio laughed at its errors, or declaimed against its abuses, in its own territories; while Erasmus in the Netherlands, Chaucer in England, and Sir David Lindsay, the Chaucer of Scotland, were pouring ineffable and everlasting ridicule on its monks, its priests and pardoners, they were told that theirs was but the retailing of vulgar ignorance and envy;—but what followed? Time proclaimed it TRUTH. The corrupted tribes were chased away by popular fury and scorn, and have left only a name which is an infamy and a warning.

From age to age, the great spirits of the world have raised their voices and cried, Liberty! but the cry has been drowned by the clash of arms, or the brutish violence of uncultured mobs. Homer and Demosthenes in Greece, Cicero in Rome, the poets and martyrs of the middle ages; our sublime Milton, the maligned, but immovable servant and sufferer of freedom, who laid down on her altar his peace, his comfort, and his very eyesight; our Hampdens and Sydneys, the Hofers and Bolivars of other lands, have, from age to age, cried, Liberty! but ignorance and power have been commonly too much for them. But at length, light from the eternal sanctuary of truth has spread over every region; into the depths and the dens of poverty it has penetrated; the scholar and the statesman are compelled to behold, in the marriage of Christianity and Knowledge, the promise of the establishment of peace, order, and happiness,—the reign of rational freedom. We are in the very crisis in which old things are to be pulled down, and new ones established on the most ancient of foundations,—justice to the people. To effect safely this momentous change, requires all the watchfulness and the wisdom of an intelligent nation. The experience of the world's history, warns us to steer the safe middle course between the despotism of the aristocracy and that of a mob; between the highest and the lowest orders of society. The intelligence, and not the wealth or multitudes of a state, must give the law of safety. To this intelligence we say,—Be warned by universal history! Snatch from the priesthood all political power; abandon all state religion; place Christianity on its own base—the universal heart of the people; let preachers be as schoolmasters, simply teachers; eschew reverend justices of the peace; very reverend politicians; and right reverend peers and legislators. They must neither meddle with your wills, nor take the tenth of your corn; they must neither tax the people to maintain houses in which to preach against truth; nor persecute you, or seize goods for Easter

offerings and smoke-money. The system by which they tax you at your entry into the world ; tax you at your marriage ; at your death ; must be abolished. The system by which you are made to pay for every thing, and to have a voice in nothing—not even in the choice of a good minister, or the dismissal of a vile and scandalous debauchee ; by which you are made the helpless puppet of some obtuse squire, and the prey of some greedy and godless priest, must have an end.

On this age, the happiness of centuries—the prosperity of Truth, depend ;—let it not disappoint the expectations, and mar the destinies of millions !

THE END.

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